

FROM COVENT GARDEN TO WAITING TABLE
The manager now taking the orders
THE EYE

THE GREATEST MUSICAL EVER
The man behind the West End revival of *Show Boat*
ARTS, PAGE 13

PREMIER LEAGUE OF MEMOIRS
Sniping, score-settling and drama in confessions from Number 10
FEATURES, PAGE 16

DRESSING FOR THAT AFTER WORK DATE
Men are finally making the effort
CITY

THE INDEPENDENT

Wednesday 29 April 1998 45p (IR 50p) No 3,597

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Today's news

Couple held over beating

A COUPLE were being questioned by police last night after a 12-year-old boy suffering from scores of injuries was discovered tied to a bannister during a police raid on a house in Poole, Dorset. The youngster had suffered violent beatings and was left with a fractured skull, wrists and ankle injuries and a dislocated jaw.

Page 2

Patten praises Ulster deal

THE former Hong Kong governor, Chris Patten, rejected suggestions that he was taking on a "poisoned chalice" by becoming chairman of the commission which would review policing in Ulster. He said: "Other people in Northern Ireland and the British government and the Irish government have been extremely brave in reaching this agreement. I think anybody who believes in a free, prosperous, democratic future in Northern Ireland should do what they can to assist."

Page 4

Life without work

UNLESS the education system undergoes immediate and revolutionary change, "millions" of Britons will be condemned to a life without work. The Government and business are showing a "worrying lack of understanding about the pace and extent of change", according to one of the country's foremost independent think-tanks. Page 8

Campbell's sick rag

A SCATHING attack on "the vomit" of the *Daily Telegraph* has been delivered by the Prime Minister's official spokesman, Alastair Campbell. His antipathy towards the right-wing broadsheet has been prompted by its negative coverage of the Northern Ireland peace process - even after the Good Friday agreement was struck.

Page 6

Paedophiles refused

AT least one in two probation hostels are refusing to accept sex offenders because of fears of vigilante attacks, it was revealed yesterday. A government inspector warned that it may soon become impossible to find supervised places for potentially dangerous criminals, including paedophiles, because of the recent violent demonstrations. Page 2

Lawyers cash in

A "TOP 40" list of the barristers and firms of solicitors that earn the most from legal aid work reveals that some lawyers can make more than £500,000 a year, while one company was paid £8.5m. The statistics from the Lord Chancellor's Department were criticised yesterday by the Bar Council as misleading and inaccurate. Page 3

Business news

Biotech drug row

BRITISH Biotech's former head of clinical research last night launched a damning criticism of the company's two main products, as the row between Dr Adrian Millar, who was sacked last week, and his former employers descended into an ugly war of words. Page 19

Sports news

White trailing

THE Jimmy White bandwagon was running off course at the Embassy World Snooker Championship in Sheffield yesterday. Despite the vociferous support of the majority of the crowd, White trailed 7-1 to Ronnie O'Sullivan after the first session of their quarter-final. O'Sullivan today needs just six frames out of the remaining 17 to claim his place in the semi-finals. Page 30



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If you ever doubted that politicians need spin doctors, here's the proof

Style file: Tory leader William Hague and actress Su Pollard winning Top Tie Wearers awards from the Guild of British Tie Makers in London yesterday. Hague's euro warning, page 6; Leading article, page 16; Photograph: Andrew Burman

Poisons ruin wildlife paradise

By Michael McCarthy
on the Coto Donana
and Elizabeth Nash in Seville

SPAIN is facing an ecological disaster at the Coto Donana national park, Europe's biggest nature reserve, despite earlier assurances from the Spanish government that a major leak of toxic waste had been controlled.

With heavy rain lashing the area near Seville, they fear the residue from the mining waste, laden with lead, arsenic, cyanide and other heavy metals, will permeate the area and blight it for decades.

And the effects of the contamination of an underground water supply could last 30 years, according to Miguel Ferrer, director of the Donana Biological Station,

who leads a team of scientific researchers in the park.

Although the contaminated water and sludge that burst through a dam on Saturday has been diverted away from swampy park directly, the vast area of toxic mud left behind in the countryside beyond could be fatal for Donana's spectacular colonies of wetland birds, said Alejandro Sanchez, director of SEO, the Sociedad Espanola de Ornitologia.

Already the storks, herons and other waders have begun to feed on the thousands of fish, frogs and crabs and smaller creatures that have been killed by the pollution that swept down the Guadalquivir river from the mine at Aznalcollar, and are now lying in the mud, visible and tempting.

The birds would be taking the highly toxic dead animals back to feed their young, Dr Sanchez said.

"The polluted water has been more or less controlled, but now there is a natural channel of toxicity into the park through the birds themselves," he said. "They normally go out of the national park to feed on these areas and now they are being attracted to the oed mud with all its dead fish and frogs and crabs. Yet each one of these is a piece of poison."

Donana's birds of prey, from the Spanish imperial eagle down, would be affected as they ate the birds that had fed on the mud. "A chain of toxicity will build up in the park. It's very, very likely that many species will be affected in the next week or two weeks."

The park director, Alberto Ruiz de Larrea, insists that the area surrounding the reserve must be cleaned to prevent the destruction of its function as a protective buffer zone for the wetlands. He was particularly worried that the waters now gushing into the sea at the Guadalquivir estuary were not strongly polluted.

"This means that the poisons have been deposited in the soil. Apart from the immediate impact which is already bad enough, what worries me more is that because we have diverted the course of the contaminated Guadalquivir river, the Donana can no longer receive water from it and it will be constantly underwater. Depriving the wetlands of their natural supplies of water will have long-term

effects on the ecological structure, whose extent I cannot predict."

The only hope would be an immediate action plan for the restoration of the whole area to include the removal of all the dead fish and other creatures, and the mud itself. "We are trying to convince the administration how urgent it is," Dr Sanchez said. "We think if no action is taken in the next few days there will be a disaster for the birds of Donana."

There is also great concern that the local groundwater might be contaminated by the toxic waste, which would be a long-lasting problem.

The Coto Donana comprises

the marshlands at the mouth of the river Guadalquivir in south-west Spain and is one of the largest wetlands in Europe.

The pollution threat is so potentially catastrophic because of the size, variety and rarity of its bird colonies, which make it a place of pilgrimage for birdwatchers from all over the world. Nesting in the park are - among much else - 600 pairs of purple herons, 400 pairs of spoonbills, 400 pairs of little egrets and 1,000 pairs of the large, cool-like purple gallinules - the sight of any one of which would be a notable "twit" for a British birdwatcher.

Toxic disaster, page 12

Shearer is out of the World Cup squad

By Andrew Buncombe

THE RUMOURS are true. Alan Shearer and Gazza have been sensationally left out of the England squad for this summer's World Cup finals. Well, sort of.

While every England fan hopes the two players will be leading by example in France this June, there is one place they will not be appearing - the Panini World Cup sticker book.

The stickers and sticker books have gone on sale priced at £2.49. But for the first time in the 36 years that Panini have been producing stickers to mark football's greatest celebration, the company has failed to secure agreement with some of the players involved.

It means fans across Europe tearing open their packets of stickers will find no pictures of the rugged Georgie striker who wears No 9, or the slightly less rugged Georgie who wears a daft grin.

The Professional Footballers Association (PFA) yesterday confirmed the players' absence but dismissed reports it was because there had been a disagreement over fees. "The situation was that Alan had other contractual commitments that meant he could not take part in the project," said George Berry, the PFA's com-



Alan Shearer: Ruled out by contractual commitments

mercial executive. "I don't know what those commitments were but the reports that it was about money are wrong. Alan Shearer flies the flag for the association and he often does so for barely anything."

He said Paul Gascoigne was not included because they had been unable to contact his agent in time. Because he was playing in Scotland at the time, he was not under the auspices of the PFA.

The sticker business was started by Giuseppe Panini in the 1960s, though the company has since been bought out by the US group Marvel. A statement issued by the company yesterday said: "We went to every length to ensure every player was included."

That may be the case but it will be of little consolation to the players' legions of fans. Sheila Spiers, vice-chairman of the Football Supporters Association, said: "I think the kids will be very disappointed."

Vaccine may herald end of the dentist

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

A LIQUID vaccine dripped onto the teeth can provide protection against dental decay for up to six months, scientists disclosed yesterday.

The discovery could spare millions the pain of the dentist's drill and threaten the future of toothpaste manufacturers. Researchers from Guy's hospital dental school, who have spent 25 years searching for a vaccine, said it was safe and effective and could be produced easily and cheaply in large quantities.

Asked if this heralded the end of tooth decay, Professor Tom Lehner, who led the research team, said: "I hope so. I think it is the beginning of the end."

The vaccine is made by genetically modifying tobacco plants to produce an antibody. In the mouth the antibody attaches itself to the bacteria that cause tooth decay, preventing them from sticking to the teeth. The bacteria, called *staphylococcus mutans*, break down sugar to form acid which etches the tooth enamel and allows decay.

A trial of the vaccine, published in *Nature Medicine*, in which it was painted on the teeth of 15 volunteers twice a week for three weeks, showed that it provided protection

against the bacteria for four months. Further observations by the research team suggest that as little as two applications every six months may be all that is needed to prevent decay. Professor Lehner said there was a "strong possibility" that the vaccine could eventually be applied at home but a larger study was needed to confirm the findings, which could take four to five years. Regular toothbrushing would continue to be necessary to keep the gums healthy, he said.

Although tooth decay has declined since the introduction of fluoride toothpaste, it still affects half of children by the age of five, and three-quarters of all 17-year-olds.

Guy's dental school has signed an agreement with a Californian company, Planet Biotechnology, to produce the vaccine and there are plans for a trial in San Francisco. The professor said he was "rather sad" that the discovery had gone to California but British companies had shown no interest.

The technique of obtaining antibodies from genetically engineered plants opened up the possibility of tackling other infections. Professor Lehner said antibodies might be produced against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and against food-poisoning bacteria such as salmonella and *E.coli*.

CHILDREN IN SUDAN ARE DYING

She's exhausted and starving, but she's walked all day to bring her grandchild to a relief centre. She may be too late.

Civil war and drought have brought thousands of children to the brink of death in Sudan. Malnourished, exhausted and sick, they are in desperate need of help. As the lead agency coordinating relief efforts in southern Sudan, UNICEF is providing high-energy foods, medical supplies and shelter to as many as possible. But every day more children move closer to starvation.

We rely totally on voluntary contributions. If you have a cheque book or a credit card, please use it now and help us save these children while there's still time.

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Top lawyers get £500,000 a year from legal aid

By Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

A "TOP 40" list of the barristers and firms of solicitors that earn the most from legal aid work reveals that some lawyers can make more than £500,000 a year, while one company was paid £8.5m.

Statistics from the Lord Chancellor's Department disclosing the 20 barristers and 20 solicitors' firms who reap most from the legal aid fund were immediately criticised yesterday by the Bar Council as misleading and inaccurate.

The publication of the totals, which range for individuals from £190,000 to more than £500,000, is considered by some as an attempt by Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, to "soften up" the legal profession and public in the run up to proposed cuts in the £1.4bn legal aid budget.

The figures, although complex and in several cases incomplete, do however provide an interesting insight into what some of the legal high-fliers can earn from public funds.

The two top earners are Alun Jones, QC, and Malcolm Swift, QC, who earned at least £500,000 from legal aid in the year 1996-97. Mr Jones, 49, was head of Kevin Maxwell's legal team during his fraud trial - said to be the most expensive criminal trial yet. Other big-earning barristers were Edmund Lawson QC, currently counsel to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, who was paid more than £450,000, and leading defence counsel Ronald Thwaites, who earned more than £400,000. All the figures could include work done in previous years and may omit money owed from on-going cases.

Timothy Raggatt QC, one of the barristers named as a high earner, denied receiving more than £350,000 in legal aid in the previous financial year. He said he had actually earned a total of £265,000 last year, from le-

gal aid and other sources, but after running costs for his two sets of chambers and other deductions he expected to pay tax on about £190,000.

He said: "I don't think I would pretend that's other than a comfortable income." But he added: "It's comparable with a partner in a modest firm of accountants or a consultant surgeon. I'm a senior professional doing the most serious work in my professional field - murder cases, fraud, child abuse and seven-figure personal injury cases."

The biggest earning solicitor's firm was Nottingham-based Freeth Cartwright Hunt Dicks, which was paid more than £8.5m. But much of this cash was passed on to other solicitors and barristers involved in complex multi-party actions. The firm employs 160 lawyers.

Irwin Mitchell, a high-profile personal injury practice with offices in London, the Midlands and Yorkshire, was the second biggest-earning solicitors' firm, netting payments of more than £2.6m.

Nigel Pascoe QC, chair of the Bar's public affairs committee, said: "These figures are open to very serious misinterpretation, particularly by those determined to undermine the Bar. Good barristers resist crude attempts to pillory them, instead of a fair examination of the true position."

The Law Society, which represents solicitors, said the figures "did not add anything to the debate on legal aid".

Lawyers believe that the publication of the figures by Geoff Hoon, junior minister at the Lord Chancellor's Department, in response to a parliamentary question, is an attempt to gain support for the Government's plan to reform the legal aid system.

Lord Irvine plans to end legal aid for personal injury cases this summer and replace it with conditional "no win, no fee" agreements.



John Eatwell: Seeking professional expertise in board members

Royal Ballet addict with a surprising passion for rugby

IN THE NEWS
LORD EATWELL

LORD EATWELL, once Neil Kinnock's economics adviser, later Labour's economic spokesman in the House of Lords and now President of Queen's College, Cambridge, is at first sight an unlikely chairman of the Royal Ballet. Rugby football is his chief recreation, writes David Lister.

But the appointment of John Eatwell yesterday to chair the Royal Ballet board will not surprise his students at Queen's College. He famously sent them to dance classes to be trained by a ballerina.

"They now know they have muscles where they didn't think any existed," he said, "and their results have improved" - although he concedes the credit for that to their rugby coach rather than their dance coach.

In his first interview as Royal Ballet chairman given exclusively to *The Independent*, Lord Eatwell promised a new approach aimed at getting more young people in to watch dance and widening the education remit of the company. But ballet prices which usually go up to around £50 did not strike him as unreasonable.

"For a three-hour evening you should pay 30 per cent more than you pay to see Chelsea for one and a half hours," he said. "The people are the same age, they are just as athletic and you get music too. But, yes, we have to bring in people who have never been before."

Lord Eatwell's own conversion to ballet came in 1987. "When my 19-year-old daughter Tatiana was six ... the Royal Ballet came to Cambridge and performed in a tent on Jesus Green. I took her to see *Swan Lake*. It was the first time I had been to the ballet ... I thought it was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen. I became an addict and needed a regular fix ... The first thing that struck me forcibly that day was 'my

God, how can they do that': the sheer physical virtuosity of the company, and then I got more involved in the ideas in dance."

Lord Eatwell says he is looking forward to the company having a home and rehearsal space in Covent Garden for the first time when the Royal Opera House reopens next year. The Royal Ballet will have five performance and rehearsal studios; there will be open rehearsals and space dedicated to new and experimental work.

His new approach is characterised by the board members he has chosen: "I wanted to put together a board of people with professional expertise to bring to the service of the Royal Ballet."

And so he has choreographer and community dance expert Christopher Bannerman; promoter Lilian Hochhauser; dance film producer Ross McGibbon; broadcaster Susannah Simons; and the president of the Royal Academy of Dancing, Dame Antoinette Sibley, as well as musician and choreographer Kenneth Thorpe.

Also yesterday, the Royal Opera board under composer Michael Berkeley was widening its expertise appointing such people as singer Thomas Allen and Royal Academy of Arts exhibitions organiser Norman Rosenthal.

Lord Eatwell said of the Royal Ballet: "It is our responsibility to show that we use our public subsidy effectively and present an exciting programme, and that we are changing peoples lives like mine was changed in a tent in Jesus Green."

FROM SWINDON TO THINKTANK: John Eatwell went to grammar school in Swindon. His wife, Hâine, is French and of Russian origin. They have two sons and one daughter. Lord Eatwell, who has taught economics at Cambridge since 1970, helped to set up the Institute of Public Policy Research, a Labour thinktank.

ON 'REAL' UNEMPLOYMENT: Last year he claimed the "real" level of unemployment was 12 rather than 6 per cent. There is a great deal of "disguised" unemployment, he said. He defines this as all the people doing a job where their productivity is below their potential - for instance, a qualified accountant who can only find work selling hamburgers.

RUGBY - HOUSE OF LORDS STYLE: At the age of 53, Lord Eatwell still plays rugby for the Lords and Commons team. But this is rugby for chaps used to good lunches. The team plays games of four 15-minute sessions with intervals between each session for them to get their breath back.

ON BALLET AND COOL BRITANNIA: "I have had discussions with the Foreign Office who are very keen to promote the Royal Ballet and dance generally. So watch this space. One aspect of ballet and dance is that it is a universal language. I don't accept that the Royal Ballet is ignored at all in Cool Britannia. It's a vital force."

Virus fears lead scientists to hold back on pig transplants

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

SCIENTISTS planning the world's first xenotransplant from a genetically modified pig said yesterday they would only go ahead if studies showed patients already treated with living pig tissue remained uninfected by pig viruses.

Hundreds of people worldwide, many in Russia and Eastern Europe, have been treated temporarily with tissue or organs taken from pigs while their own organs recovered or while they waited for a human transplant. Skin, livers, spleens and kidneys have been used in the experiments - in all cases (except skin) outside the body but attached to it.

Researchers from Imutran, the Cambridge biotechnology company which has bred a herd of genetically modified pigs for use in human transplants, are

examining blood samples from 150 of these patients for evidence of viral transmission. The results are to be presented to a scientific meeting in July.

Dr Corinne Savill, chief operating officer of Imutran, told a press briefing yesterday that if the findings of this and other laboratory studies currently under way were positive, the company would move to the first human trials involving transgenic pig livers. These would be used as a temporary "liver dialysis" machine, attached to the patient outside the body for up to 72 hours, allowing extra time to find a human transplant.

If these were successful, the company would apply to the regulatory authority set up by the Government last year for approval to move to a small clinical trial involving the transplant of kidneys, and, later, hearts.

"Nobody who is serious about

xenotransplantation sees this as a quick fix."

Ms Savill said the first human transplants could take place within five years - a more cautious projection than was offered at the company's last press conference in 1995 when the scientists behind Imutran, David White, an immunologist, and John Wallwork, a transplant surgeon, reported their success in transplanting pig hearts into monkeys and said they hoped to begin the first human trials by the end of 1996.

Yesterday's meeting was a subdued affair at which Professor Robin Weiss of the Institute of Cancer Research, the first scientist to warn of the risk of transmission of pig viruses, was invited by the company to spell out his fears.

Professor Weiss said there were four pig retroviruses identified and laboratory studies had shown that two had the poten-

tial to infect humans. A virus which caused leukaemia in gibbons had been shown by genetic analysis to be derived from rodents, in whom it caused no harm. "Pigs have a similar virus that could come out. That is what we are worried about."

Retroviruses cannot be bred out of the pigs because they are inserted in the DNA of the cell. Furthermore, genetic modification of the pigs to prevent rejection of their organs by humans might make viral transmission more likely. The risk to patients in the trials would probably be outweighed by potential benefit but the risk of a virus spreading into the human population, although remote, was potentially far more devastating.

Professor Weiss said: "If we are doing fancy things to make the transplant work, are we upping the ante in terms of infection? We don't know but we want to be wise before the event."

MPs call for ban on sale of Mary Bell book

By Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

NINE Labour MPs have called for a book written with the help of child-killer Mary Bell to be banned.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said on Monday that he would consider changing the law to stop criminals from profiting from their crimes through book deals.

But a Commons motion tabled by Labour MPs yesterday went much further, saying that the book, by Gitta Sereny, should be banned altogether.

The first instalment of a serialisation of the book, to be published by Macmillan, is due to appear at the weekend, and a row has been provoked by the fact that Ms Sereny has admitted she paid Bell for her help in producing the book, *Cries Unheard*.

She has refused to say how much money was involved, although yesterday's Commons motion noted "with disgust reports that payments of £50,000 have been given

to Mary Bell, a child killer convicted in 1968 of murdering two children."

The murdered children were Martin Brown, aged four, and three-year-old Brian Howe.

Yesterday's motion said such a payment "is deeply offensive to the general population and to the parents of the victims, as Mary Bell should not be permitted to profit from these tragedies."

The MPs urged Mr Straw "to take action to ensure that other criminals are not able to make money from their crimes."

Lindsay Hoyle, Labour MP for Chorley and the motion's main sponsor, said yesterday: "I am disgusted Mary Bell is able to profit from these horrific murders."

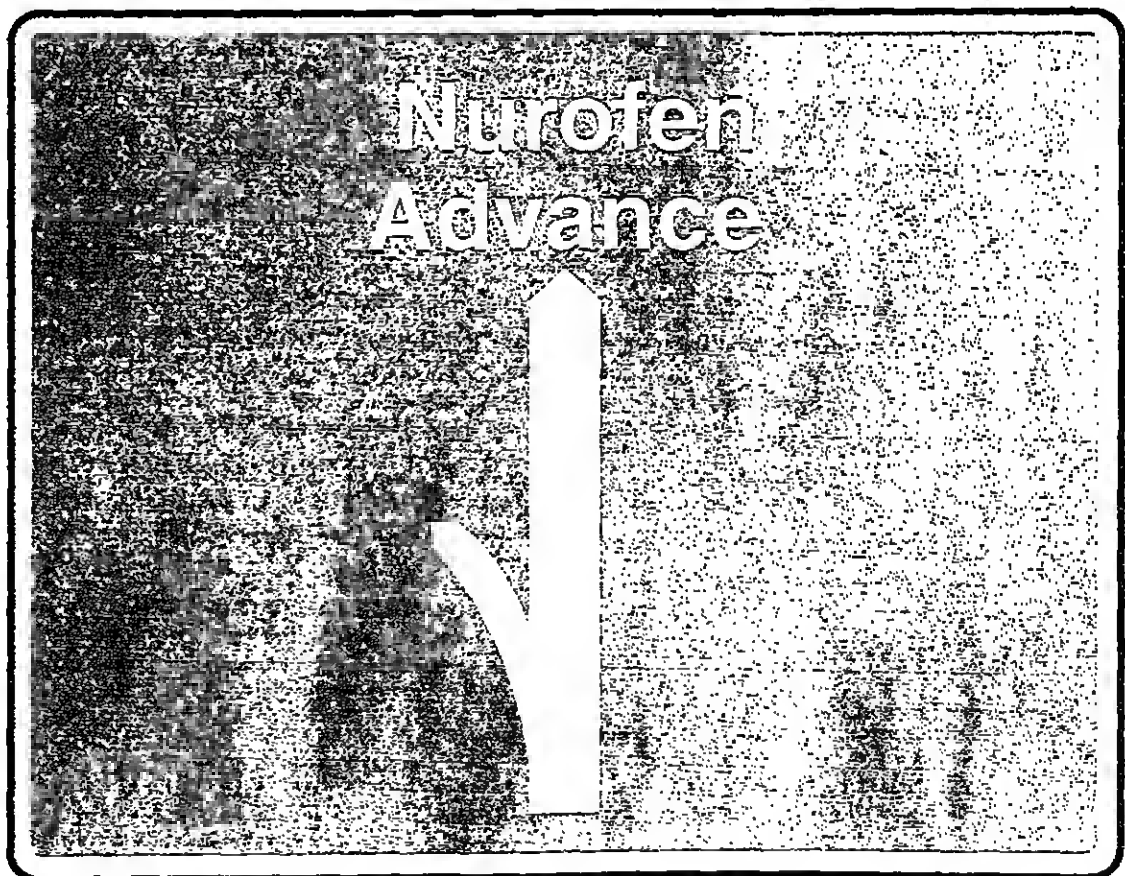
"It is extremely insulting to the parents of the victims of these murders to see that the person convicted of killing their child is allowed to cash in on their atrocities."

Mary Bell, who was released from prison in 1980, now lives in the North of England under an assumed identity.



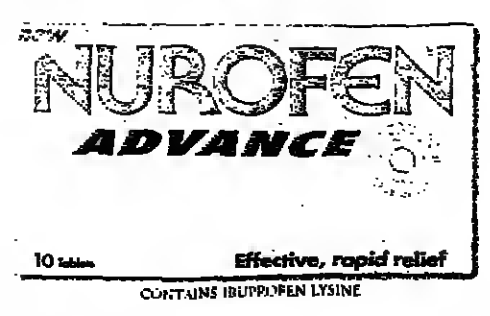
Mary Bell: unlikely to profit

She has a child of her own, and for the benefit of that child, the courts have given her complete protection from any form of public identification, with an injunction known as a "Mary Bell Order".



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Peace drive too late for an innocent young man



The body of Claran Heffron being taken through his home village of Crumlin, Co Antrim, yesterday. A Catholic student, he was murdered on Friday by suspected loyalist gunmen

Photograph: Brian Harris

By Kim Sengupta
in Co Antrim

IT WAS a busy day in the drive for a settlement in Northern Ireland yesterday, with the ANC and Chris Patten in the news. But it was all too late for Claran Heffron.

The latest casualty of sectarian hatred was buried by his family at his home village in a ceremony which echoed the sorrow and anger of his community at the waste of a life when peace seems so near. The 22-year-old student is believed to have been the victim of loyalist terrorists out looking for a Catholic to kill.

His funeral at the village of Crumlin, Co Antrim, was attended by Catholics and Protestants. A thousand walked in silence behind the cortege, the church of Mater Dei was full, and hundreds stood outside in the rain to hear the parish priest say Mr Heffron's murderers were "inspired by the Devil" to do what they did.

He was shot dead in the ear-

ly hours of Saturday as he took a short cut home from his local pub after a night out with friends. His killers are believed to be from the Loyalist Volunteer Force, although it has not claimed responsibility.

Father John O'Sullivan, who knew Claran, a University of Ulster student, well, declared

that the reason for the death was religion. "Sometime on Friday evening some evil men decided that a Catholic young man should die in Crumlin. The only reason for the killing was his religion. God had given these men the gift of free will, to do something good and noble or to do something cruel,

cowardly and vicious. And, inspired by the Devil, they made the decision to kill an innocent young man."

The Bishop of Down and Connor, The Most Reverend Michael Dallat, said that in the minds of the gunmen "Claran was guilty, guilty of being a Catholic. What makes his mur-

der even more heinous is that it was done when so many people in this land are fervently praying for peace. We cannot, dare not, give up hope. We must continue to pray for an end to sectarianism and pray for a just and lasting peace."

Crumlin is a mixed community without a history of

any serious trouble between the communities. Almost all the shops in the village were shut as a mark of respect, and the Ulster Unionist Mayor, Paddy Marks, was among those at the service. Also there was David Ford, an Antrim councillor and general secretary of the Alliance Party.

Many people had come from other towns and villages, and some said they felt a need to be there to show their belief in a multi-religious future for Ulster. Robert Donaldson, from Belfast, said: "I am a Protestant and I wish to state that the people who did this do not represent me or my religion."

I have got nothing but contempt for them. We must learn to live together if we are to have any hope of a normal future."

At 11am yesterday a minute's silence was observed at the University of Ulster's campuses. Peter Roebuck, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Provost of the Coleraine campus, expressed the shock the university has felt. There was also sympathy for Mr Heffron's family and condemnation for his murderers from the National Union of Students, and the Union of Students in Ireland, which at the weekend called on members to vote yes in the coming referendum.

There have been claims that Mr Heffron's killers had intended a rally of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party on Friday evening. But this was denied by Dr Paisley, who said: "We are totally opposed to any violence... We have no association with anybody that takes violent means. There is an effort to try and blacken us but the truth will out."

Yes men ride into battle against Paisley

By David McGitterick
Inland Correspondent

THE Ulster Unionists and the SDLP yesterday launched their separate campaigns for a Yes vote in next month's referendum on the Good Friday agreement, as senior members of the African National Congress arrived in Belfast for a series of republican-sponsored events.

Up to now the No campaign, headed by the Rev Ian Paisley, has enjoyed the lion's share of publicity and exposure, with

many elements complaining that the pro-agreement forces have been much less visible and vociferous.

Those who support the accord hope that Mr Paisley's campaign, centring on a series of rallies and doom-predicting news conferences, may have peaked too soon. One possible straw in the wind came when the local council in Larne, Co Antrim, voted in favour of agreement.

The loyalist town has both a strong Paisley influence and

an Ulster Unionist MP, Roy Beggs, who is strongly opposed to his party's endorsement of the accord.

Pro-agreement elements therefore take it as a heartening sign that the Unionist grassroots are leaning towards the accord.

The senior ANC member Cyril Ramaphosa is to visit re-publican prisoners in the Maze H-blocks today, and is tonight scheduled to share a rally platform with Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams.

Anti-agreement Unionist MPs have meanwhile criticised the news that Chris Patten, the former governor of Hong Kong, has been asked by Tony Blair to head the commission looking into the future of policing in Northern Ireland.

William Thompson MP said of him: "Most Unionists will remember Mr Patten as he stood lowering the Union Jack on Hong Kong and what we find in Northern Ireland is that the British government are slowly but surely lowering the Union

Jack. Perhaps it is appropriate that they bring him along to take part in that."

The emergence of Mr Patten's name has however been welcomed by the Ulster Unionist party leadership. Ken Maginnis MP describing him as "a man of outstanding ability and someone who will understand the implications of having had to police a community like ours since 1970".

Gardaí in the Irish Republic have meanwhile ruled out paramilitary involvement in

the murder of a Belfast man whose body was found wrapped in plastic sheeting near the border on Monday. They are instead following the theory that the victim died as the result of a row between drugs gangs.

A number of men are helping the RUC with inquiries into the recent killings of two Catholic men by extreme Protestant groups. More arrests were made yesterday following searches in the Co Armagh town of Portadown.

Leading article, page 20

Boys die as wall collapses

TWO BOYS were crushed to death yesterday when a wall collapsed on top of them while they were playing on waste ground. The accident happened as the pair were trying to make a hammock from wire across the 5ft walls on the land in Kemsley, Kent.

The two friends, who lived locally, were named as Gavin Glover, 15, and Steven Coleman, 11. A third boy, also 15, who has not been named, was playing there but was unhurt; he raised the alarm. The wasteland belongs to a packaging company, Rexam plc, based in Knightsbridge, west London. A spokesman for the company yesterday said it would be releasing a statement.

Welsh assembly finds home

THE National Assembly for Wales will have its home on a site close to the historic Pierhead building on the waterfront in Cardiff, Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, confirmed yesterday. The Royal Institute of British Architects is to organise a competition to select an architect and design for the building. The headquarters will not, however, be ready in time for the first elections in the devolved body in May next year.

No May Day dip for students

OXFORD students have been banned from the traditional May Day celebration of jumping from Magdalen Bridge into the River Cherwell because of fears over safety. Chief Inspector Phil Gurney of Thames Valley Police said the river was running 10 times faster than last year, and, if the students jump in, "they are unlikely to surface".

Anti-racist groups took over Lawrence family, police liaison officer claims

By Kathy Marks

A POLICE family liaison officer assigned to support the parents of Stephen Lawrence, the murdered black teenager, admitted yesterday that relations with them had deteriorated rapidly but denied being offhand or unsympathetic.

Detective Sergeant John Bevan told the public inquiry into Stephen's death that he and another liaison officer, Detective Constable Linda Holden, were regarded with suspicion and mistrust soon after meeting Neville and Doreen Lawrence.

Asked by Edmund Lawson, QC, counsel to the inquiry, why relations broke down, he replied: "That's something that I have mullered over for five years, and I would love to have an answer to it."

"I tried everything I could to



Stephen Lawrence's Parents say police were patronising

communicate with the Lawrences. I wanted to be there for them, and I still want to be there for them today."

The Lawrences have told the inquiry that Det Sgt Bevan and Det Con Holden were patron-

ising towards them and kept them in the dark about the progress of the murder investigation.

The inquiry has also heard that members of groups such as the Anti-Racist Alliance set up camp in the Lawrence house after the murder.

Det Sgt Bevan, who volunteered for the liaison task, said: "There were tremendous barriers to communication. I think the Lawrences were taken over by lots of outside bodies who wanted to make their own statement through them. I think it was that that had the biggest effect on the lack of communication."

He denied that he and Det Con Holden had been unsympathetic or offhand with the Lawrences because they were black. "Certainly not, in no way whatsoever," he replied. "I

remain tremendously sympathetic to this day, and that's absolutely genuine."

Mr Lawson suggested to Det Sgt Bevan that he had given the family no information whatsoever to explain the two-week delay before any arrests were made.

He replied: "I think I would have told them that some suspects had been identified, but probably no more than that."

Later, Mrs Lawrence issued a statement responding to claims this week by three police officers that the attack on Stephen, who was stabbed by a white gang, was not racially motivated.

DAILY POEM

After Making Love

By Stephen Dunn

No one should ask the other
"What were you thinking?"

No one, that is,
who doesn't want to hear about the past

and its inhabitants,
or the strange loneliness of the present

filled, even as it may be, with pleasure,
or those snapshots

of the future, different heads
on different bodies.

Some people actually desire honesty.
They must never have broken.

into their own solitary houses
after having misplaced the key,

never seen with an intruder's eyes
what is theirs.

This poem comes from the American poet Stephen Dunn's tenth collection, *Loosestrife*, which is published today by WW Norton (£8.50).

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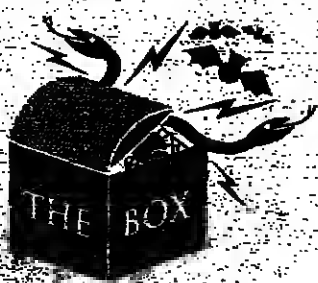
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Sucks and stones

IF CHAIRMAN returns to Northern Ireland to look into the RUC's conduct, no doubt that the former Northern Ireland Minister will be welcomed back to the province by many, particularly his friends in the SDLP. However, Pandora recalls that a number of Unionists were deeply upset with Pat's 1994 decision as environment minister to change the name of the Lough to 'Derry'. He was even called 'Lundy', a highly insulting nickname for 'traitor' in that part of the world. Pandora is certain that Chris, having been called 'traitor' by the Chinese regime, won't be prevented from doing an impartial job by a few more slurs.

Disappearing minister

THE LANCING's upcoming re-shuffle is enlivening all the ears of Westminster. Pandora's poll of Commons imbibers revealed that the most heavily tipped minister to get the chop is Tom Clarke, minister for film and tourism, known as 'Mr. Lyntonic'.

Piercing question

AFTER the Chelsea interior designer Nicky Haslam revamped his image, he found life as a Liam Gallagher-lookalike full of opportunities. Most recently in the Ivy, Nicky was telling friends: 'Ever since Carla told Peter that I was pierced down here I just can't keep him off the telephone.' Pandora wonders who and what Nicky could possibly be talking about?

Earl goes without

EARL Spencer made a terrible PR mistake when he was rude to a gossip columnist from the *New York Post* at the White House correspondents' dinner on Saturday. 'I don't read newspapers,' he told the hack. 'I haven't read a newspaper in eight months.' The earl couldn't have known that the ooc US newspaper which appears to be widely read by British journalists is the *NY Post*. Its three daily gossip columns are available on the Internet and Pandora's counterparts seem to devour them. Yesterday, for example, the diary columns of the *Telegraph*, *Times* and the *Express*'s William Hickey all picked up the *Post*'s story about a tantrum thrown by the British actress Minnie Driver aboard an aeroplane from LA to New York. Pandora will look with great interest this morning to see if either the *Telegraph*, *Times* or *Express* carries the *Post*'s story about Earl Spencer's newspaper abstinence.

Pandora

Paris-Match fined for publishing photo of Diana and Dodi kissing



Diana, Princess of Wales and Dodi Fayed on board the yacht at the time the contentious shot was taken

By John Lichfield
in Paris

THE celebrated paparazzi photograph of a kiss between Diana, Princess of Wales and Dodi Fayed cost the magazine *Paris-Match* £10,000 in fines and damages yesterday.

In an action brought by Dodi's father, Mohamed Al Fayed, a court in Paris found the magazine guilty of breaching the French law which forbids press intrusion into private life.

The magazine published the photo - already widely used by the British press and others - four days before the road accident which killed the couple in Paris on 31 August last year.

Nine photographers and a photographic dispatch rider, who were pursuing Diana's car when it crashed, are still under investigation for possible charges of manslaughter and failing to give assistance after an accident.

The photograph was taken off the coast of France when Diana and Dodi were on holiday last August on Mr Fayed's yacht. In the court hearing on 3 March, Bernard Darteville,

the lawyer acting for Mr Fayed, said he had personally requested *Paris-Match* not to use the photograph at the time.

The editor, Roger Thérond, had refused, saying its widespread use by other media made it virtually a public document.

Mr Fayed had asked for £40,000 in damages.

The conviction of *Paris-Match* under the privacy laws is an example of the toughness of the French legislation; but it is also a reminder of its ineffectiveness. A £10,000 bill for fines and damages will not unduly bother the magazine, which has often paid far more for the right to use exclusive photographs.

Paris-Match's even more intrusive rival *L'Espresso* was convicted of 37 similar offences last year.

It will upset *Paris-Match*, however, to be singled out for its connection with the paparazzi hue and cry last summer, which continued until a few seconds before Diana and Dodi died.

The magazine must publish an account of the judgment in its next issue.

Britain gathers roses at TV awards

By Paul McCann
Media Editor

THE COMEDIAN Harry Enfield has been pipped at the post for television's top prize for a record third time after losing the Golden Rose of Montreux last night to cellist Yo-Yo Ma and his unique television interpretation of Bach.

Nevertheless British programmes again dominated the awards, winning half the silvers on offer and taking a third of the nominations.

The American cellist collaborated with artists, film directors, and even the ice-skaters

Torvill and Dean, to make a wacky classical music programme that used film sets, outdoor scenes and on-screen graphics rather than the traditional concert hall setting. The top-award was taken by the Canadian company which made it, but the six-part series was shown on BBC2 at the beginning of this year to much critical acclaim.

Harry Enfield won a Silver Rose in the comedy category. It was his third silver, having won in 1990 for *Northern Smith A Life* and in 1995 for his *Smashy and Nicey* send-up of ageing disc jockeys.

In acknowledgement that Enfield keeps being runner-up, the town of Montreux created a special award of its own to send to the comedian. Enfield said last night: 'I'm delighted that my shows seem to have gone down so well over the years in Montreux... It probably means that they are equally comprehensible in any language.'

Also getting a silver for Britain was BBC2's less well-known sit-com *Operation Good Guys*, a spoof fly-on-the-wall documentary about an inept police crime squad. It pushed Channel 4's smash hit *Father Ted* into third place, garnering a bronze for its makers, Hat Trick Productions.

It emerged from the closed jury sessions that *Operation Good Guys* was neck-and-neck against Yo-Yo Ma for the Golden Rose. Geoffrey Perkins, the BBC's head of comedy, said the programme was not only innovative, it was also one of the cheapest ever made for British television.

Fledgling British broadcaster Channel 5 won its first ever programme award by winning a silver award for its documentary *Ozzy Osbourne - Uncut*.

A Japanese game show format which has been bought by ITV to be fronted by Cilla Black won the silver in the game show category.

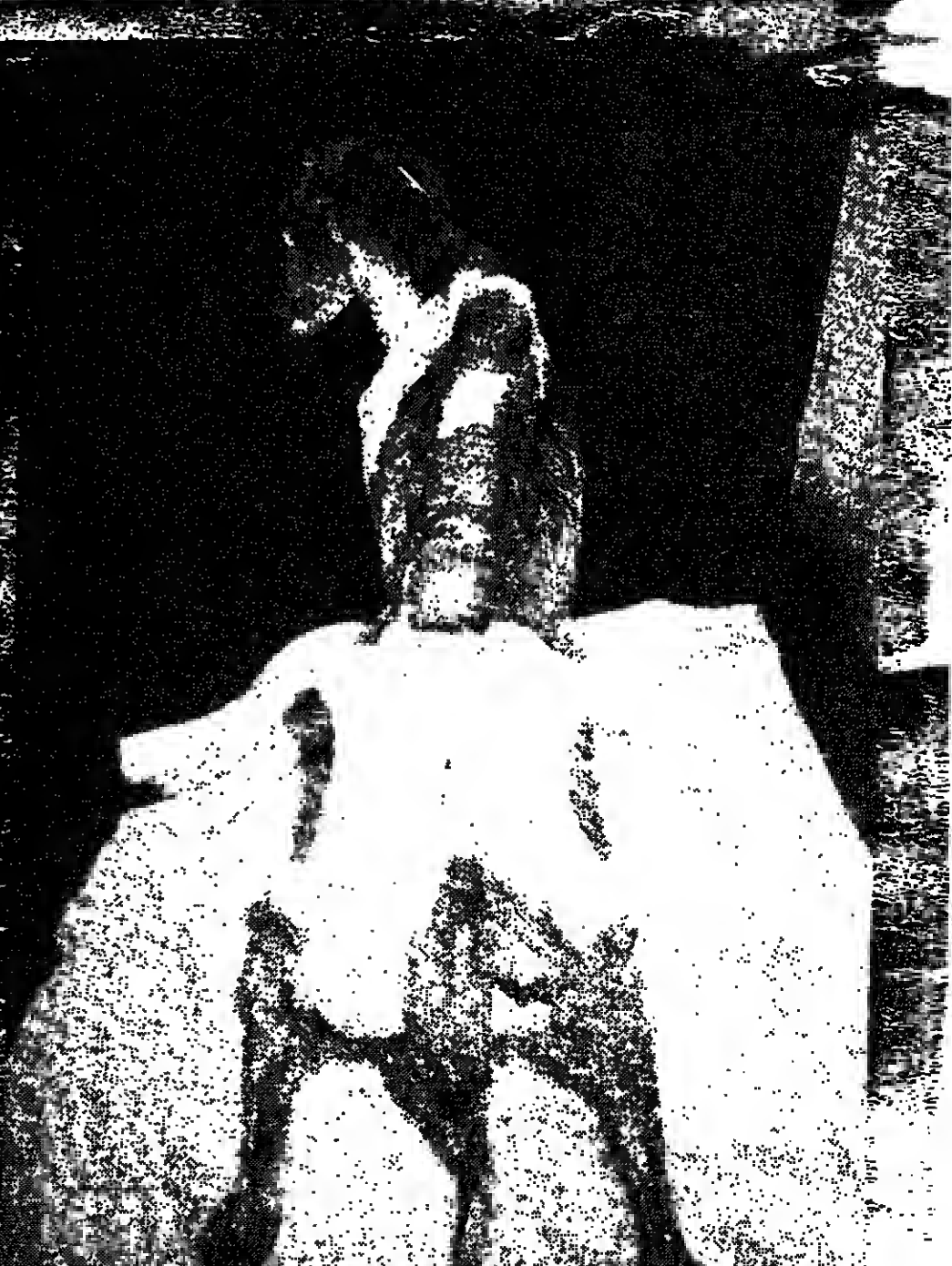
Happy Family Plan, which will be softened for the British market, challenges families to learn tricks over a course of a week if they want to win prizes.

It has become a hit in Japan thanks to scenes of anguish as children are parted from the fabulous prizes they have played with for a week because their parents have not mastered the task set them by the show.



Harry Enfield: Special award from town of Montreux

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Labour chief regrets 'Donnygate' scandal

By Linus Gregoriadis

DONCASTER Council's ruling Labour group apologised for its involvement in the "Donnygate" scandal yesterday as part of its campaign for next week's local government elections.

Malcolm Glover, leader of the council, chose a visit to a nursery to unveil his party's election manifesto, and to apologise for the corruption scandals that continue to embarrass the Labour-held council.

The statement, printed in Labour's Doncaster Manifesto, Change and Renewal, said: "The last year has been a difficult one for both the Labour Party and the people of Doncaster. The image of the party, the council and the borough as a whole has suffered because of the activities of a small number of people, and the Labour Party deeply regrets what has hap-

pened. The Labour Party has responded to the serious allegations that have been made and acted to bring about real change across the party in Doncaster."

Mr Glover, speaking at the Baby Family Resource Centre in the ward where he is up for re-election next Thursday, said: "We are sorry about what has happened over the last 12 months. When you have an episode like we have for the last 12 months, it has been traumatic for people, traumatic for me as leader and traumatic for my colleagues."

However, his words, which follow refusals by himself and other senior Labour figures to apologise over councillors' misconduct, were dismissed by critics of the council as a cynical stunt designed to boost Labour's chances in next week's election, in which one-third of

the metropolitan borough's seats are being contested.

Ted Moffatt from the group, Name The Names, which wants councillors who are under investigation for over-claiming expenses to be identified, said: "There are various councillors standing in the elections who have been involved in the paying back of expenses as a result of the district auditor's investigation. People should know who they are voting for. This statement is not enough."

A district auditor's investigation has been going on for more than two years in Doncaster after allegations of junketing and of corrupt land deals. Although an interim report named four senior council figures as particularly culpable, this investigation and a parallel one by South Yorkshire Police are still going on. Claims of excessive foreign

travel, expenses and hospitality, and allegations that council members had questionable relationships with local developers are under scrutiny.

Labour's National Executive suspended the district party in the aftermath of the scandal. It was recently revealed that police had obtained court orders to search the bank accounts of 15 key councillors, and that a £200m property development involving a company controlled by Douglas Hall, the former vice-chairman of Newcastle United Football Club, was also being investigated by police.

Doncaster Tories are hoping to benefit from local discontent in next week's election. Andrew Isaacs, the local party chairman, is hoping to win a seat in the Bessacarr ward which now has Labour councillors in all three of its seats, but which is traditionally a Tory area.



Malcolm Glover, the leader of Doncaster Council, making a public apology for the 'Donnygate' scandal during a visit to a children's playground and nursery at a family resource centre yesterday
Photograph: John Houlihan/Guzelian

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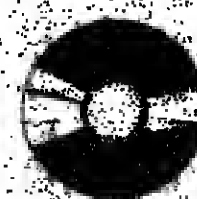
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PM's aide rages at newspaper

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A SCATHING attack on "the vomit" of the *Daily Telegraph* has been delivered by the Prime Minister's official spokesman, Alastair Campbell.

His antipathy towards the right-wing broadsheet has been prompted by its negative coverage of the Northern Ireland peace process - even after the Good Friday agreement.

Mr Campbell has made an art form of taking on government critics, repeatedly picking on BBC radio's *The World at One* and the *Guardian*. But his loathing for the *Telegraph* peaked during his in-flight conversation with the press pack during last week's flying visit to the Middle East - after Mr Blair

had taken every opportunity to spell out the fact that that was the limit of his ambition, and that he had no wish to "cut across" the American lead.

The newspaper's coverage of Northern Ireland has been marked by its doom-mongering, and the more pessimistic it has been, the more annoyed Mr Campbell has become.

Soon after last year's election landslide, the newspaper's Irish correspondent, Toby Harnden, reported that it was unlikely that Mr Blair would want to move quickly on Northern Ireland, adding: "There is also a question mark over how committed Mr Blair can be to achieving a settlement in Northern Ireland."

By January, Mr Harnden was reporting: "With the Northern Ireland talks stalled after 18 months without discernible progress, the 'peace process' appeared to be edging once again towards collapse."

After the Good Friday agreement had been reached, Mr Harnden reported: "It will be many months before it becomes clear whether the elaborate arrangements agreed on Friday will succeed in practice, and the agreement states that if one part collapses, then the whole structure will fall down."

Price of euro-fudge

ECONOMIC turmoil, high interest rates, job losses and bankruptcies will follow a fudged deal by European Union leaders on the single currency in Brussels this weekend, William Hague warned yesterday, writes Anthony Bevins.

The warning was delivered as a Labour-dominated Commons select committee reported that it would take at least five years before it could be known whether the currency was working, and whether it would meet British tests for viability.

In a speech to a London business conference, the Conservative leader said: "Before the election, the Prime Minister promised that he would stop a fudged single currency. This Friday, on the an-

niversary of the general election, he must ... speak out against a fudged single currency. My guess is that he will duck the decision and leave the people and businesses of Europe to pick up the pieces."

Mr Hague warned that economic alignment between the countries joining up to the euro was an essential pre-requisite for a currency that could work. "Get it wrong and businesses will pay the price," he said.

Peter Lilley, the shadow Chancellor, last night noted with satisfaction that as the currency does not replace national currencies until 2002, another five-year moratorium would effectively rule out membership in the next parliament - in line with Tory party policy.

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Big rise in cases of animal abuse and neglect

By Kate Watson-Smyth

CRUELTY to animals rose by 16 per cent last year, with more than 2,000 recorded cases of animals suffering abuse and neglect, it was announced yesterday.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said that despite its efforts to educate the public about responsible pet care, the

number of convictions for animal cruelty rose from 2,282 in 1996 to 2,650 last year.

Cats and dogs are the most common victims, but cruelty to wildlife almost doubled in 1997, rising from 121 cases in 1996 to 221 last year.

Richard Davies, the RSPCA's chief officer of inspectorate, said: "While public donations allow us to bring the perpetrators of cruelty to

justice, it's the many animals who suffer at the hands of cruel owners who pay the ultimate price.

"It is incredibly frustrating for RSPCA inspectors, who work so hard to prevent cruelty, to continue to see an increase in the number of animals found abused and living in appalling conditions."

The number of calls to the society's hotline reporting emergencies

and seeking advice rose by more than 7 per cent from 1,303,481 in 1996 to 1,397,516 last year, amounting to one call every 22 seconds. And the number of defendants prosecuted by the RSPCA rose by 23 per cent, from 971 in 1996 to 1,195 in 1997.

Alex Ross, a spokesman for the society, said: "It is very worrying that although there are more and more television programmes trying to ed-

ucate people about responsible pet ownership, the numbers are still going up. People seem to forget that a cat or a dog lives for about 10 years which is longer than most people will own their car and they need to think about that when they get a pet."

However, the figures also show that a total of 8,255 animals were rescued from danger and 169,846 unwanted, sick and injured animals

were collected. The highest number of convictions was in the North-east with 570, compared with 96 in the South-west.

The Tory MP Roger Gale, chairman of the all-party Parliamentary Welfare Group, said people who are cruel to animals should face a lifetime ban on owning them.

"While I am, of course, pleased that RSPCA inspectors are bringing

the abusers to court, the fact remains that there are still some courts that are not prepared to throw the book at the perpetrator and ban them from owning animals - for life if necessary. For the kind of people that we are talking about, a fine and costs is likely to prove no real deterrent and the magistrates' courts must recognise that when passing sentence," he said.

Salmon stocks hit by dry spells and pollution

By Louise Jury

SALMON catches in England and Wales last year were among the worst on record, according to figures released by the Environment Agency today. Pollution, climate change and over-fishing are thought to be to blame for the continuing downward trend in salmon stocks since the Seventies.

Both fishermen and environmentalists said that urgent action was needed to tackle the decline. Figures reported to the Salmon and Trout Fisheries Centre, set up by the Environment Agency last year, show that anglers have rarely recorded poorer catches. And commercial salmon catches using nets were the lowest recorded, 39 per cent less than the average for the previous five years.

A key factor is believed to be changes in the temperature and currents in the North Atlantic where salmon go to feed. But pollution in many rural rivers combined with low water flows caused by the dry weather of 1995 and 1996 are also thought to be problems.

Dr Michael Wachturst, pollution campaigner at Friends of the Earth, claimed that water companies should accept much of the blame. Over-ab-



Short supply: Fishermen say that international co-operation is needed to halt the decline in salmon numbers. Photograph: Colin McPherson

straction from rivers to compensate for water leakages had contributed to the low flows. And where water levels were low, sewage treatment needed to be improved to counteract the greater effect of pollutants.

Arthur Oglesby, who teaches fishing, blamed the people who own the fishing rights. Unlike in the United States, where fishing is public, all salmon fishing above the tide level in Britain is in private hands. "Many of the owners are not doing anything constructive about re-stocking. A

river is a total ecological unit, but if you own a few miles you're only concerned with your bit of it."

But there were other culprits too, he said. For example, sand eels were believed to be a salmon food source, yet the Danes extracted thousands of tons of them from the North Sea.

David Pilkington, fishing instructor at the Arundell Arms in Lifford, Devon, said the biggest problem were large quantities of fish taken by nets out at sea, in particular giant drift nets along the north-west coast of Ireland.

Mr Pilkington said the declining salmon stocks needed international co-operation, but owners were doing what they could at a local level. For the first time, the Tamar and Tributaries Fisheries Association, comprising the main fisheries on the Tamar, had agreed a voluntary restriction on spring fishing. "Most fishermen care very deeply. People are now more prepared to catch a salmon and then let the fish go," he said.

Although the report covers England and Wales, the situation was just

as bad in Scotland, according to Simon Taylor, of the Gordon Lennox estate in Freuchabers, Morayshire. "Last year was an abysmal year right across Scotland," he said. "But 100 years ago there was a terrible shortage of spring fish. I think the present shortage is worse, but it is cyclical."

Dr Nigel Milner, head of the Salmon and Trout Fisheries National Centre, said they were working with other organisations to improve river habitats and introduce additional controls where needed.

Safety alert over defective babywalkers

By Kate Watson-Smyth

PARENTS whose children use babywalkers were yesterday warned to contact the manufacturers after 10 of the most popular brands failed safety tests.

Trading standards inspectors said they were urging the manufacturers to recall the affected products and warned that thousands of defective models could already be in use in homes across the country.

But manufacturers challenged the results of the tests and said they had no plans to recall their products.

In the tests carried out by Liverpool Trading Standards with officials in Caerphilly and the Department of Trade and Industry, 50 out of 54 babywalkers failed to comply with the necessary standard.

Some of the models were found to be lacking the required safety warnings to alert parents to the potential dangers associated with using babywalkers. In the most serious cases the babywalkers were unstable and liable to tip over, putting babies at risk of head injuries.

The report urged worried parents to contact their local trading standards department.

Peter Mawdsley, head of Liverpool Trading Standards, said parents needed to contact the manufacturer for assurance about their product. "The

advice we have received from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents indicates that these types of failures are likely to present a risk of injuries to babies," he said. "We have therefore asked producers to stop supplying products which do not comply with the standard and to arrange to recall all the products affected."

Nigel Griffiths, the consumer affairs minister, called on the manufacturers to take "urgent action", or risk losing public confidence in their products. He said the report raised "serious concerns" about the safety of a number of models.

However, the Baby Products Association, which represents huffy goods makers, questioned the validity of the tests which it said had not been carried out in compliance with normal protocols. It added that 94 per cent of accidents involving babywalkers were caused by lack of proper supervision rather than the design of the product.

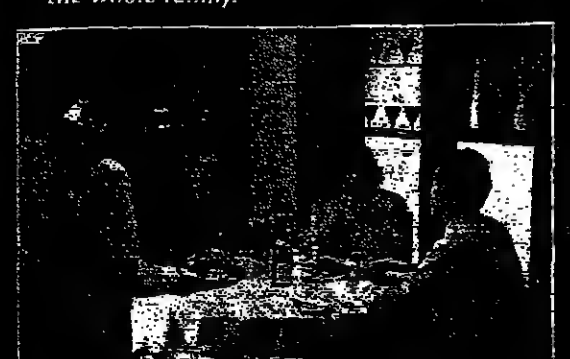
The 10 named products are: Bee Bop Albion with Activity Tray; ABC Design Activity Walker; Article No 997064; Chicco Item No 63098; Brevi Speedy Art 554; Silver Cross Safari; Baby Club New Baby Walking Trainer Model T-1074; Mito Bambino/Mio Bambino; Mamas & Papis Walk'n'Play/Mio Bambino Walk'n'Play; Pello Star (Qim Bar or To Bar 1177 244 97).

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Children 'not ready for work of tomorrow'

By Barrie Clement
Labour MP

UNLESS the education system undergoes immediate and revolutionary change "millions" of Britons will be condemned to a life without work.

The Government and business are showing a "worrying lack of understanding about the pace and extent of change", according to one of the country's foremost independent think-tanks.

In a sidestroke at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's tough economic policy, a hard-hitting critique published yesterday by the Royal Society of Arts said government must recognise the need to create employment as well as control inflation.

And instead of concentrating on cramming general knowledge into young people, schools should also impart practical "competences" so that pupils can survive in the brave new world of flexibility.

The study declares that educational institutions are preparing people for a world which no longer exists.

Written by Valerie Bayliss, the report, *Redefining Work*, says that incessant reforms of the Eighties and Nineties "bolted change on to a system which is essentially 19th century".

Ms Bayliss said young people wanted their education to prepare them for the real world with skills they need to live and work.

To prepare for the new millennium the education system should be built around "competences" such as literacy, numeracy, familiarity with information technology and an understanding of the concept of

"proof". Young people should also be equipped to acquire knowledge and an ability to manage their time and finances.

Ms Bayliss argues that there has already been a revolutionary change in the world of work over the last two decades. Some 70 per cent of the new jobs created in the last five years have not been full-time or permanent. The era of the traditional, permanent job was quickly coming to an end and the pace of change was accelerating.

Workers, however, had a limited ability to deal with such flexibility, she believes. Around half of the adult population left school at 15 and half of those have had no formal education since.

While ministers had made a start in reforming the benefits system, it was essential that the unemployed should be encouraged to become more employable by constantly updating and changing their skills. She contended that after three months on the dole, a condition of benefit should be that the claimant improves his or her employability.

The report calls for a Learning Institute to encourage a life-long process of education. The institute would provide the research on which to base the new system.

Many people distrusted the advice they received from financial companies. The financial sector needed to re-design their products to cope with the new uncertainties.

For environmental reasons the Government would eventually give tax concessions for teleworking, so that most people would work from home at least some of the time.



Furnings: Gridlock in Crystal Palace yesterday, near the site of the proposed 4,000-seat cinema and its 1,000-place car park. Photograph: Andy Blackmore

Car park sprawl may choke capital

AN AREA larger than Hyde Park, St James's Park and Green Park will be covered in concrete and converted to car parks under proposals being considered by London councils. A study by the Council for the Protection of England, entitled *London's Great Parking Plague*, has found that boroughs are planning for 120,000 parking places, covering 615 acres.

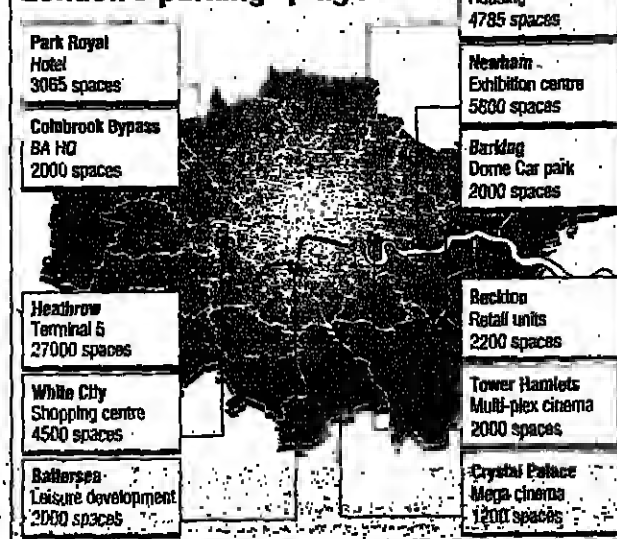
Randeep Ramesh on plans that 'mock ministerial calls to leave cars at home'

The report argues that by approving such schemes ministers are giving the go-ahead to generate millions of car trips - "mocking calls by ministers to leave the car at home". Some of the biggest schemes include 8,100 spaces at the Millennium Dome; 5,800 at an exhibition centre in Newham, east London; and 4,500 at the White City Shopping Centre, west London.

The largest development is the Terminal 5 project at Heathrow, which, if given the go-ahead, could be home to a 27,000-space car park.

The scale of proposed developments is in part due to the booming London economy. This demands homes for people to live in; shops to fulfil their consumer needs; and increasingly large leisure complexes for their spare time. So it is unsurprising to find Enfield borough council planning a residential develop-

London's parking "plague"



ment with parking for 2,000 cars near a cinema-cum-sports complex which itself has nearly 800 parking spaces.

There are no comprehensive figures on the amount of car parking available in London. Surveys compiled by London First, a lobby group for big business in the capital, estimates that there are 160,000 "public off-street parking spaces" in the 32 London boroughs, and a further 100,000 spaces in inner London for those who drive to work.

Transport experts have long cited the ability to park at the end of a journey as a major reason why people make trips by car, rather than by public transport.

The Government recognises and accepts this analysis. Ministers issued planning guidance two months ago which stated that "non-residential parking" should be "significantly reduced".

The amount of traffic that the new parking arrangements would generate is unclear. "The total number of trips

generated by a single car-parking space depends on what it is being used for," said Lynn Sloman, assistant director for the think-tank Transport 2000.

"For a business, it would be one trip in and one trip out. But for a shopping trip each space could be filled every two hours."

However, company car parks cause more havoc. "The journeys made occur in the rush hour - just when you do not want

them," said Irving Vass, transport analyst at London First.

The forthcoming transport White Paper is likely to allow councils to tax "private non-residential" car parking in order to raise revenue for public transport and reduce congestion in town centres. A survey for Bristol city council showed that using existing powers to curb car parking would lead to a drop of 41 per cent in traffic levels.

Prescott faces court challenge over 'film village' in London park

CAMPAIGNERS are set to take ministers to court over plans for London's largest cinema complex which will see a 20-screen film village and a 1,000-place car park erected on one of the capital's parks, writes Randeep Ramesh.

Local residents will this week seek judicial review of the refusal by John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, to grant a public inquiry into the £60m development, set to be built on the site of the Crystal Palace in south London.

The proposal for a new 4,000-seat multiplex cinema on the site of the Victorian original - burnt down in 1936 - was given the green light by councillors in Bromley last week. The attraction could see up to 90,000 visitors a week to the area - which campaigners say would cause traffic chaos.

Local residents are furious the scheme will not be open to scrutiny. The developers intend to drive a road through the

park, which is both Grade II-listed and a conservation area.

Campaigners against the cinema complex say the site is "metropolitan open land" and thus protected by the Government's strategic guidance for London. This states: "Land of this importance should not be used for developments which compromise its open character and value to London's green setting."

John Payne, chairman of the Crystal Palace Campaign, said: "There has been scant consideration to the traffic problems that would be generated by the cinema. The roads are already jammed and there will be thousands of extra cars using them with the multiplex."

"The site will also lose 100 mature trees and local businesses fear they will lose out because the council wants to turn the surrounding roads into no parking areas. The only option is a judicial review."

The council is facing an in-

creasing band of objectors. It has received a petition with more than 5,000 signatures and a public meeting this week should attract hundreds.

However, Bromley council is determined that the project opens in 2000. "It is part of a regeneration package which includes landscaping Crystal Palace park and re-developing the sports stadium," said David Bartlett, the council's deputy chief executive.

The council, which will receive a "premium" of £6m for the site, points out that the development will create 1,000 new jobs in the area. "We will be spending £5m in transport arrangements - including a new bus terminal," added Mr Bartlett.

This argument satisfied Mr Prescott. His officials successfully argued that the "wider regeneration context" and public transport provision meant the Deputy Prime Minister should not intervene.

Roads in worst condition ever

By David Walker
Social Policy Editor

THE roads and pavements of England and Wales are in their "worst" condition since records began. The 1997 National Road Maintenance Condition Survey compiled jointly by the Government and councils noted a "marked deterioration" last year over the state in 1996.

The survey is based on council officers touring a sample of

the roads and pavements in town and country and recording their visual impressions - whether surfaces are uneven or potholed.

Not all roads are getting worse. All-purpose trunk roads improved "visually" last year, although the surveyors note engineering evidence that their underlying condition is also worsening. Local and minor roads looked worse. Inspectors saw that the condition of pave-

ments and roadside footways declined sharply, with - as the bureaucrats put it - an increased incidence of severe unevenness. This means that people are more likely to trip up.

This survey has been carried out since the late Seventies and this finding accords with the decision in many councils in recent years to cut their spending on maintenance of roads and pavements in order to protect their social services and schools.

'Sunspot Bug' may disrupt satellites in 2000

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

ORBITING communications and television satellites could suffer a "Sunspot Bug" along with the Millennium Bug in 2000. British scientists warned yesterday.

Transatlantic telephone lines might go dead and satellite television channels black out as the chips on satellites are bombarded with electrons thrown out by vast tornadoes on the Sun's surface, intensified by a peak in the number of dark sunspots.

Observations by the Soho satellite, which studies the atmosphere of the Sun, show that the number of sunspots will hit a 10-year peak in 2000 - just as computers on Earth are struggling with the changeover to a new millennium.

Sunspots, which are cooler areas on the Sun's surface, cause solar storms which in turn lead to increased emissions from the Sun of charged particles which are flung out into space. When these reach the Earth they can disrupt sensitive chips, because they set up electromagnetic fields that interfere with the tiny flows of electricity inside the circuits.

During the last sunspot maximum between 1989 and 1991, solar storms were blamed for power failures and damage to several satellites. "Since then the human species has become more dependent on satellites and computers, and advanced microchips are more vulnerable to the Sun's electromagnetic effects and particles," said Richard Harrison, a principal investigator of the effects.

Soho - the Solar Heliospheric Observatory spacecraft, located one million miles from the Earth - has also discovered that the Sun's surface is buffeted by tornadoes, with "winds" travelling at 310,000 miles per hour. "The 'tornadoes' consist of superhot gases at 250,000C, which mainly collect at the poles, from which they pour into space."

"We see the hot gas in the tornadoes spiralling away from the Sun and gathering speed," said David Pike of the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, UK, who is co-discoverer of the solar tornadoes with Helen Mason of Cambridge University.

"These spectacular events in the Sun's atmosphere must have widespread effects."

Space calling Wales

AFTER Neil Armstrong's "one small step" on the Moon 29 years ago, space buffs were yesterday presented with another extra terrestrial "first" when words of Welsh reached Earth from outer space, writes Tony Heath.

Dr Dafydd Rhys Williams, an astronaut aboard the Space Shuttle *Columbia*, linked up with the BBC Wales television programme *Wales Today* to send messages in the ancient tongue back to his homeland.

His family emigrated to Canada from Bargoed in South Wales, but always retained an affection for the old country.

That was heightened last year when pupils from Stanwell school in Penarth visited Houston, Texas, where Dr Williams was training for the mission which blasted off on 17 April.

He learnt Welsh from tapes supplied by the BBC so that he could use the language when contacting Earth. An enthusiast for all things Celtic his kit aboard *Columbia* includes a Welsh Dragon flag and the cap awarded to Gareth Edwards for his 50th appearance for Wales in a rugby international.

Dr Williams told viewers that after blast off the crew members produced pocket mirrors so that they could look back through overhead windows and see the Earth getting smaller and smaller. "Eight minutes later, we were orbiting the Earth at 25 times the speed of sound. It's absolutely amazing," he told *Wales Today's* reporter, Amanda Powell.

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New look for France's farming heartland

John Lichfield examines a plan to reverse the emptying and pollution of the countryside with measures to support the small, family-sized producer

THIRTY years ago there were 3,000,000 farms in France. There are now fewer than 200,000 and fewer every month. In a national state of depression, from Belgium to the south of France, almost all the small, family-sized farms are dying. By 2020, 100,000 more farms and 1,000 villages are expected to disappear in the next 20 years.

After paying up service to the civil service, Paris is now trying to reverse decades of policy in an attempt to stop or at least slow down the emptying and the increasing pollution of the countryside. The Agriculture Minister, Louis Le Penec, has finalised plans to shift policy away from its 30-year obsession with increased productivity and bulk exports. A proposed framework law, circulated to unions and others this week, says policies of the future should be based on environmental and social, as well as economic, considerations.

Farmers would be encouraged to take on "contracts" with the state; the level of their subsidies would depend on their contribution to preserving nature, the creation of jobs and improvement of food quality. Farm subsidies, partly funded by the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), would no longer be automatic or encourage greater and greater output.

The law would also create new planning procedures to discourage the swallowing up of smaller, family-sized farms into agri-industrial behemoths. All this represents a considerable earthquake in French farm policy - and farm politics. Paris has been devoted since the mid-1960s to promoting France as one of the world's great mass producers and exporters of food as well as the leading producer of high-quality and high-price foods and wines.

The new approach is recognition that the future of rural

France, socially, ecologically, and economically, will be better served by concentrating on the second, not the first. It is partly a response to growing public disquiet - especially in northern France and Brittany - about the ecological damage from intensive, chemically dependent farming methods. It is also a reaction to the BSE crisis and the growing interest of

many villages and small towns have been kept alive by jobs in nearby cities. France is big and relatively empty; it has thousands of small, isolated communities. Across a large swath of the country nothing can replace agriculture if such communities are to survive. The old philosophy of productivity at all costs has been driven by the farm unions, traditionally dom-

Now you see that only the big cereal growers are protesting... We have argued for years that our future must be rooted in traditional methods, high added value and good-quality produce."

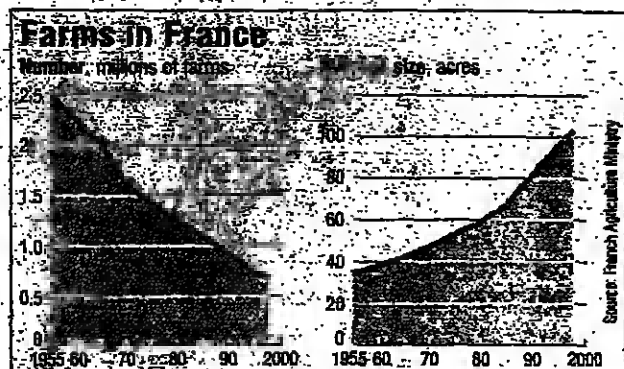
Others are more suspicious. Joël Bialoux is a local official of the young farmers' union in Creuse, central France. He farms organic, grass-fed beef on 375 acres near Aubusson. As recently as 1980 his farm was 11 different farms. It now counts as an average-to-large family farm of the kind the new plan is supposed to help.

Mr Bialoux says Mr Le Penec's idea is "fine... as long as it is not taken too far. I don't want to become a gardener or a park-keeper... I'm not interested in being here just to maintain the countryside in the way townspeople and tourists think it should look."

The new approach is, in part, recognition that changes in world trade policy and budgetary and political pressures in Brussels make the old form of CAP untenable. The French proposals fit the philosophy of a new round of farm-policy reforms planned by the European Commission - except in one crucial respect. Brussels wants to slash - even further than it already has - the level of price support: the artificial price at which the EU intervenes to prop up the market.

The commission believes that new, direct aids, based on environmental or social considerations, should compensate farmers for lower prices.

The government and all the farm unions are terrified by the prospect of a free, or freer, market in food. They say lower basic food prices in Europe would undermine the new drive to quality and ecologically friendly methods. They would make it even harder to persuade consumers to pay a premium for "naturally" produced food.



The old philosophy of productivity at all costs has been driven by the farm unions

consumers in the methods used in food production.

But the switch is, first and foremost, belated recognition of the plight of smaller, family farms, whose interests have been trampled by the Paris - and Brussels - obsession with publicly subsidised productivity at the expense of quality and markets. While everyone accepts the peasant-scale agriculture which survived in France until the 1960s was doomed, even the larger, modernised holdings are having difficulty surviving in the central, hill-farming areas and parts of the north-east and south.

In more thickly populated countries such as Britain or Ger-

many, villages and small towns have been kept alive by jobs in nearby cities. France is big and relatively empty; it has thousands of small, isolated communities. Across a large swath of the country nothing can replace agriculture if such communities are to survive. The old philosophy of productivity at all costs has been driven by the farm unions, traditionally dom-

In recent years this approach has been fiercely contested, within the unions themselves, by the representatives of smaller, family-scale farms.

The unions' reaction to the proposals has, therefore, been surprisingly muted to positive - so far.

Pierre-André Deplaude, secretary-general of a rival, small farmers' organisation, the Confédération Paysanne, is delighted with the approach. He said yesterday: "If Mr Le Penec had suggested this 10 years ago there would have been revolution in rural France."



Pressing problem: Up to 200,000 more French farms will go in the next 20 years

Photograph: Adam Woolfitt

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KUT — The tops of the tombstones are still just visible above the slimy green water. A broken cement grave sticks out of a mud

KUT — The tops of the tombstones are still just visible above the slimy green water. A broken cement grave sticks out of a mud

Today the graves are under two feet of sewage water with green algae growing on the surface. The cemetery is built by the modern city of Kuwait about eight feet and needs to be pumped to keep it dry. But United Nations sanctions stopped spare parts for the pump getting through, according to local people. The gravediggers

make the same point. Mariyah Hassan Jassim, a volatile middle-aged woman in a black robe, says "look at that crack in my wall. I have five daughters and no sons. I have already sold the furniture. Now my house is falling down." She points to a crack in the wall which somebody has ineffectively tried to fill with cement.

There were repeated attempts to relieve the city. General Townshend, who suffered something close to a nervous breakdown, exaggerated his shortage of supplies, leading to premature attacks by British troops outside Kut against the strongly entrenched Turks. In the four years of the Mesopotamia campaign, now a forgotten sideshow, Britain lost 40,000 men. Many of these were killed in

and around Kut. People in the city today say they sometimes find skulls and bones when the foundations of a new house are dug. Few are old enough to remember what happened though Mohsin Jassim Mohammed, 87, wearing heavy black-rimmed glasses, says he recalls his family returning to Kut later in the war "on boat number 50 from Basra where my family had fled".

The fate of the cemetery, and the people living around it, reflects the decline in civilised life in Iraq since sanctions were imposed eight years ago. Before the Gulf War there was a guardian who looked after the graves. When the British embassy was closed in Baghdad before the bombing in 1991 local people say the guard stopped being paid.

Later the pump stopped working. Sand Abdel Ridha, whose home is also under threat, says: "The water started to damage our houses in 1993-94. It has been getting worse for four years." The old

guard seems to have remained for a while, occasionally selling a headstone, but he became increasingly strange and was recently removed to a Baghdad mental asylum.

At the same time the sewage system in Kut was breaking down. There are black, evil-smelling pools of stagnant water in the streets. Mesopotamia is almost entirely flat. Water does not disappear until it is pumped. Apart from its own effluent Kut receives the partly treated sewage from the 3.5 mil-

lion people of Baghdad 80 miles upstream. Some of the polluted water flows into the cemetery.

Not all the headstones are disappearing under water. One with the name of M Mathew neatly incised on it was being used to cover a pipe leading to a sewer. He had belonged to the Indian Labour Corps and had died long after the siege, on 27 July 1920. So toxic has the former cemetery become that the people living beside it are building a four-foot high wall to

During the siege, the soldiers depended on rapidly diminishing rations eked out by mule and horsemeat. People in Kufi lived on rations still: "We get rice, sugar, vegetable oil, but we only eat meat every two or three weeks," says Saad Abdul Ridha.



Under siege: British troops at Kut, where a force of 13,000 surrendered to the Turkish army in 1916

Photograph: Imperial War Museum

Kosovo edges to war after Serb attack

By Steve Crawshaw

SERB police said yesterday that they had killed eight people in an attack on a "command centre" in the village of Glodjane, 60 miles west of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo.

The alleged attack - which has been reported by the independent Serb media but was not confirmed by Serb authorities in Pristina - appeared to be in retaliation for the recent kidnapping of eight Serbs in the area. The missing Serbs are still unaccounted for. The state-run Tanjug news agency yesterday reported another three Serbs missing and feared kidnapped near the town of Klinja.

The reported attack in Glodjane came as the Albanian-majority Serb province slips steadily towards war. Today, the six-country contact group on Yugoslavia meets in Rome to decide what to do next about the escalating violence. Theoretically, tough measures are on the agenda, including strengthened sanctions against Belgrade. In practice, the message is likely to be: stand by as the open...

European governments have reacted "less than totally positively"; in the American view. The Americans have suggested that they could "engage on some more pronounced activity on our own", if the five European members of the contact group fail to agree on a tough line.

The Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, argued that the border between Albania and Kosovo should be sealed to prevent "terrorist bands" crossing into Kosovo.



A Yugoslav army helicopter flies in foreign journalists to the Cafa Prusik border crossing between Yugoslavia and Albania yesterday . . . Photograph: Peter Kujundzic/Reuters

The Serb police response has been tough in recent months. The Albanians, meanwhile, have stepped up their guerrilla resistance. The tensions in Kosovo have increased, so that full-blown civil war has increasingly come to seem inevitable.

The very least Albanians want is autonomy for Kosovo. Following the Serb repression of recent years, many Albanians now want full independence for the province, which Serbs regard as their historic heartland. The contact group wants the two sides to negotiate. But neither Serbs nor Albanians seem keen to talk. Both believe that it is a question of all-or-nothing. Ethnic Albanians have

repeatedly boycotted Serbian talks - and did so again yesterday. Thousands of Albanians marched in Pristina in defiance of Serbian rule. Demonstrators carried banners with slogans like "Serb Police out of Kosovo".

European Union foreign ministers issued a statement in Luxembourg on Monday in which the language was notably vague. There was talk of "additional measures" in case of "continued failure to meet the international community's requirements". On past form, this can be assumed to be another way of saying: "We are not quite sure what to do, nor are we keen to do anything."

Mexican military court jails officer who exposed abuses

By Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

IN THE dour Mexican army, Jose Francisco Gallardo led the new wave — young, educated and athletic.

At age 42, almost 10 years ago, he became the army's youngest ever brigadier general. He had a degree in political science, was a national equestrian champion and placed seventh in the Pentathlon at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Then he upset the applecart. In 1993, he said publicly what every Mexican knows, that the term human rights is not generally part of the vocabulary of the Mexican armed forces. He called for a human rights ombudsman within the military to prevent abuses.

four years in pre-trial military detention on various pretexts. Mr Gallardo, now 51, was recently court-martialed and sentenced to more than 14 years in prison on what his lawyer, family and human rights groups say were trumped-up charges aimed at discouraging other soldiers from speaking out. The main charge: stealing horse feed.

Now, he is reportedly suffering the same rights abuses he publicly attacked. Amnesty International was among nine human rights groups which joined Mr. Gallardo's family this week in protesting that the Mexican army was subjecting him to "psychological torture" in a military prison.

lardo's son. Marco, told reporters.

"They took away books, magazines, clothes and documents he needs for his appeal. They're constantly training a video camera on him. They want to break him. We're concerned over his physical well-being and his morale."

The rights groups protested to the Mexican National Human Rights Commission, supposedly independent but close to the government and rarely critical of the military.

Mr Gallardo has appealed to the Supreme Military Tribunal, which is expected to rule within the next few weeks.

Bath

I have written a book, "The Story of the Negro in America," which is now being published by the University of Chicago Press. It is a history of the Negro people in America, from the time of their first arrival in the country to the present day. It is a book which I believe will be of great interest and value to all who are interested in the history of the Negro people in America.

Oil & gas seized by p

Indonesia tells of

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem. This involves gathering information about the situation and the people involved.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to analyze it. This involves breaking the problem down into its component parts and understanding how they are related.

3. After analyzing the problem, the next step is to develop a plan. This involves deciding on the best course of action to take and the resources needed to implement it.

4. The final step in the process is to implement the plan. This involves putting the plan into action and monitoring the results to ensure that the problem is solved.

Toxic disaster will blight Spanish park for decade

By Elizabeth Nash
Seville

EXPERTS responsible for Spain's Doñana national park insisted yesterday that the catastrophe inflicted on the UN-protected wetlands by a flood of toxic mining waste at the weekend is far worse than the authorities admit. With rain lashing the area, they fear the residue, laden with lead, arsenic, cyanide and other metals, will permeate the area and blight it for decades.

A principal underground water channel that serves the nature reserve - crucial for the park's ecological balance - has been contaminated, and the effects could last 30 years, according to Miguel Ferrer, Director of the Doñana Biological Station, who leads a team of scientific researchers in the park. "The Doñana has not been saved. Government assurances are over-optimistic. This is a disaster without precedent," he said yesterday. "Aquifer 27, on which most of the flora and fauna of the reserve and local agriculture depends, has been af-

fectured. We are awaiting data on the intensity and speed at which the toxic material is seeping through."

Just as serious, Dr Ferrer said, was a swath of deadly sludge 20km by 400m that skirts the wetlands. "I'm particularly worried about the mercury that's been spilt. It's a very stable element whose effects last for decades. With the constant rains, the poisons are leaking slowly into the park. The Doñana is not a closed system, and the birds do not respect administrative boundaries."

Thousands of mud-drenched corpses of fish, shrimps and crabs have started to appear throughout the route along which the torrent of black mud cascaded at the weekend on its 60km journey to the sea. Park-keepers were yesterday engaged in the unusual activity of firing bullets on the fringes of the wetlands, to frighten the geese, ducks and flamingoes into the heart of the park and prevent them feeding on dead fish impregnated with heavy metals and acidic poison.

Greenpeace has moved a protest boat in the mouth of the Guadalquivir,

near Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and is investigating the damage. "The park is surrounded by deadly toxins," Juan Lopez, director of Greenpeace's campaign against anti-toxic waste, said from the boat. "This makes government claims that the Doñana has been saved an unbelievably optimistic analysis. What's happened is they've sacrificed the whole ecosystem surrounding the Doñana so that they can say they've saved the park."

The park director, Alberto Ruiz de Larramendi, insists the area surrounding the reserve must be urgently cleaned to prevent the destruction of its function as a protective buffer zone for the wetlands. He was particularly worried that waters now gushing into the sea at the Guadalquivir estuary were not strongly polluted. "This means that the poisons have been deposited in the soil. Apart from the immediate impact... what worries me more is that because we have diverted the course of the contaminated Guadamar river, the Doñana can no longer receive water from it and it will be constantly under-watered."



Dust to dust: The 17-storey Aladdin Hotel and Casino - where Elvis and Priscilla Presley were married in 1967 - on the Las Vegas Strip, Nevada, imploding to make way for a \$1.3bn (£778m) mega-resort. Photograph: Ethan Miller/Reuters

Belgian PM survives no-confidence vote

By Katherine Butler
Brussels

THE Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene survived a no-confidence vote last night after sacking the country's chief of police to calm the public outcry following the escape of the child rapist and multiple murder suspect Marc Dutroux.

Mr Dehaene rescued his coalition after announcing to parliament that the head of the Gendarmerie, Willy Derudder, had agreed to "accept his responsibility" for police blunders which allowed Dutroux to dash from an unlocked court building waving a gun last Thursday.

Awaiting trial for the abduction and rape of six young girls and the murders of four of them, Dutroux was recaptured but only after the car he had hijacked was spotted by a forest ranger when it got stuck in mud.

Mr Dehaene said there would have to be a "change of mentality" at the heart of the police and judiciary and he promised to push through an

emergency package of reforms.

Bumbling incompetence and internal feuds in the country's three police forces helped Dutroux to go undetected for several years. Reforms were promised in November 1996 after 300,000 people protested at the failures of the justice system, but have fallen victim to political wrangling.

The Prime Minister spoke yesterday as several hundred protesters marched from the main law courts clamouring for more heads to roll. The justice and interior ministers resigned within hours of the Dutroux escape but it became inevitable that the country's top policeman would also have to go.

But on the eve of Belgium's selection as a founder member of the European single currency, Mr Dehaene warned backbench MPs in the ruling parties against plunging the country into elections. He reminded MPs that the single currency was "the most important decision for Europe and for our country since the creation of the EU".

Kremlin's thirtysomethings

PRESIDENT Yeltsin took a step towards fulfilling his desire to ensure Russia is run by a younger generation by reinstating Boris Nemtsov, 38, as Deputy Prime Minister together with a government economist, Viktor Khristenko, 40. They will be the two most senior figures in the new Cabinet under the freshly confirmed Prime Minister, Sergei Kiriyenko, 35. — Phil Reeves, Moscow

Britain on the fringe

IN A MOVE highlighting Britain's marginalisation from the single-currency inner circle, Austria is to convene the first meeting of the Euro-X grouping of Euro-zone finance ministers on 4 June. Britain does not relinquish the EU presidency until July but monetary-union countries want to see the new body in place as soon as possible after the 2 May summit to launch the currency merger. — Katherine Butler, Brussels

Abacha foes sentenced

A NIGERIAN tribunal sentenced military ruler Sani Abacha's former deputy and four others to death for plotting to overthrow him. The military tribunal, which has been sitting in secret at the central town of Jos, said 30 people had been tried for treason including Nigeria's former number two, Lieutenant-General Oladipo Diya. — Reuters, Jos

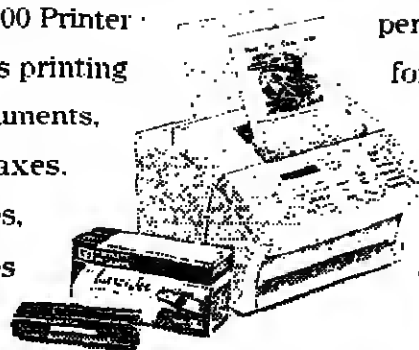
Lewinsky wets appetite

MONICA LEWINSKY, the former White House trainee who allegedly had an affair with President Clinton, has posed for *Vanity Fair* "frolicking" in the surf of Malibu beach and wearing not very much except a little black dress. — Mary Dejevsky, Washington

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Singing it again with meaning

Producer Garth Drabinsky tells Stephen Gilbert why his version of 'Show Boat' isn't a revival but a restoration of a masterpiece of musical theatre which isn't afraid to explore its serious themes

PRODUCERS come in many guises. The proverbial ones are megalomaniacal mandarins who brook no unbidden opinion. The ones that the business adores are enablers who hand pick teams and then stand back and trust them to make the best of it. But, of course, the best producers of all are the successful ones.

"That's a great question," growls Garth Drabinsky gruffly when I ask him whether he isn't a writer-cum-director who expresses his creativity through collaboration with others. A legend on Broadway, he brings to London a reputation as the most hands-on of all producers of musicals.

"I never meddle," he says, "and I know, like a good fighter, when to retreat into the corner and get words of comfort from my trainer. What I do, I hope, is to compel powerful collaborations to happen. I'm a catalyst. I'm not a frustrated writer and I'm not a frustrated director, although Hal Prince is convinced that one day I will direct and I keep saying to him that I'm really happy doing what I do. I can use a director's eye from a certain vantage-point when I have to, but I hope that my ideas are persuasive and cultured enough that I've won the respect of my collaborators."

This does not come across as false modesty. Drabinsky is a serious man in a field full of bluff, fakery and falseness. He is here with his revival of *Show Boat*, the first unmistakable masterpiece of the Broadway genre known as the musical play. Originally mounted at the end of 1927, it is a show renowned for its score, both haunting and rousing, by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II; for its striking setting of a Mississippi pleasure cruiser of the 1890s; and for its bold secondary plot, behind the central love story, about miscegenation. At the moment of the centenary of Paul Robeson's birth, *Show Boat* is perhaps widest known for the song that became Robeson's signature tune - and Kern's too - "Ol' Man River".

Show Boat is rarely out of the repertoire. Revived a dozen times in New York - and in London in 1943, 1971 and (by way of an RSC/Opera North touring co-production) 1990 - it is only exceeded in its prominence to be added to, subtracted from and tinkered with by Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*.

Drabinsky saw Ian Judge's 1990 version and was determined to take another shot in North America "but in a way that had never been done before". He figured that if he could negotiate the licence from the Kern and Hammerstein estates and "enforce the perfect director, Hal Prince, to do the only revival of his long career, then I would have a chance of doing something special that would see the work find a whole new generation, which I believe it deserves".

With Eugene Lee, Prince made a survey of the versions of the show's book and reconstructed what may come to be the definitive version. The famous John McGlinn recording of a decade ago ruled sternly on those numbers that should and should not make up a full score. "We think we've found the right assemblage of music from the various manifestations to project the story along properly," is how Drabinsky puts it.

But why now? "We're approaching the end of the century," he says. "This show begins at the latter end of the 19th century but the second act takes place in the 20th century, up until 1927. What fascinated me was the fact that Hammerstein was so bold in confronting the ills of society, especially in the form of racism, at such a tender date in his career, if you will, and in the embryonic stages of musical theatre per se."

"So few people since then have had the courage to deal with social complexity and divisiveness in such a powerful way. I was fascinated to see that a century has gone by [since the beginnings of the show's story] and, guess what, things haven't changed too much. That's an interesting piece of reflection to take towards a new century. So, Drabinsky's purpose is not just to



reproduce past success but to rediscover its true value. "Oh yeah," he says. "Reviving means nothing to me, restoration means everything. Taking a 1998 sensibility and availing myself of the technology of the day to re-examine brilliant musical scores and storytelling but with much more daring. If you will, to go deeper than the tentative approach to musical theatre that is still there. I don't believe you should pull punches. You should go for it when you have the opportunity to go for it."

This is not to suggest that Broadway has found a big-time producer with a radical political agenda, although remembering the civil rights marches of his student days,

Drabinsky's espousal of racial equality is no expedient stance for marketing purposes. "There is something personal in everything you do in the arts," he says. "You can't be a soulless man. And you can say a lot in musical theatre, more than has been said so far. And, maybe, with greater potency than people think. Musicals surely should entertain and, God knows, I want that to happen. But storytelling to engage an audience can't just be a fairytale, can't always be a romantic moment between two sympathetic souls. If you have the ability to layer a work and if it has an historical context and you can investigate the politics and the sociology of the time, then I think you have

the basis of a great evening of theatre." Accordingly, Drabinsky has John Guare working on a new version of Rodgers and Han's *Pai Joe* that explores its context - the debate about American isolationism and whether war with Hitler should be joined - to reinforce the isolation of John O'Hara's dubious hero. *Rugrats*, currently a Broadway hit and set to follow *Show Boat* at the Prince Edward, will be joined by a new musical, *Parade*, which confronts anti-semitism and will complete what Drabinsky thinks of as his trilogy of musicals about the American century.

So, here we have a producer who means business. Having built his career through

showbiz law (he literally wrote the book) and movie exhibitions in his native Canada, Drabinsky has become a major player in American theatre. He is engagingly candid about his set-backs: he was thrown out of Cineplex, the film company he built and childhood polio has left him with a ferocious limp and a back condition that can immobilise him for days. But he is fierce on behalf of what may prove a whole new field - a musical theatre rich in ideas, not just emotion. Sir Cameron Mackintosh may be looking to his laurels.

Show Boat is at the Prince Edward Theatre, London W1.

All-singing all-dancing scenes from Drabinsky's West End production of 'Show Boat', which aims to put the musical in its social context

Photographs: Gerald Lewis

BBC's golden age finally goes on the fictional record

Robert Hanks finds that Stephen Poliakoff's new play about the BBC, 'Talk of the City', is one of surprisingly few pieces about such an influential national institution

THE ORIGINAL idea was to use Stephen Poliakoff's new play, *Talk of the City*, which deals with the BBC in the run up to the Second World War, as the excuse for a piece about how the BBC has been represented in novels, plays and films.

Just off the top of my head, it would mention Penelope Fitzgerald's novel *Human Voices*, that hoary old film *Death at Broadcasting House*, and the question of how far the Ministry of Truth in *Nineteen Eighty-four* drew on George Orwell's wartime experience as a BBC employee. And, presumably, plenty of other stuff would turn up... No such luck, though.

The most important cultural institution in this country has hardly been written about. John Preston's novel *Ghosting* was set in the early days of the corporation, and there are novels where characters give radio talks. (There is a scene in the Powell and Pressburger film *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* where General Wynne Candy is prevented from giving a radio talk.) There must be other examples, but the fact remains that there is a gap in the fossil record of literature.

On a brute, practical level, the BBC has been a cultural patron on a scale that makes the Medici look like a gang of philistine tight-wads. It has commissioned music, poetry, and plays from some of the greatest artists of the century (Elgar's *Third Symphony*, the one that has just been aired in Anthony Payne's version, was a BBC commission; so was *Under Milk Wood*; Harold Pin-

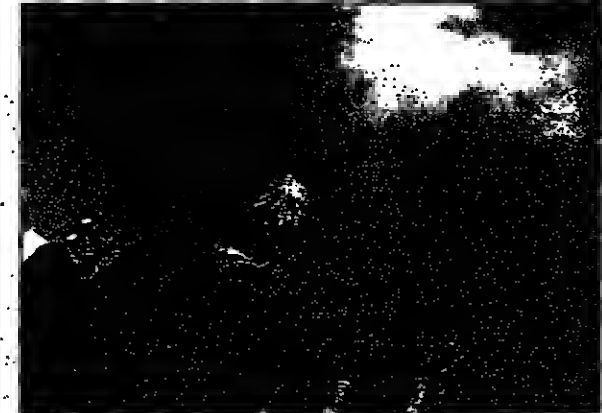
ter, Samuel Beckett and Tom Stoppard all took the shilling at some point). Most writers you can think of have kept their heads above water by giving talks, writing little radio plays, abridging novels. You would expect a few of them to have turned the experience to account.

The BBC has such symbolic possibilities. It is organised as a very pure form of bureaucracy; any creative output has always had to burrow its way to daylight through a matted undergrowth of forms and procedures.

It embodies the clash between high cultural tradition and modern populism (as observed in Radio 3's continuing efforts to attract bigger ratings). In the 1980s it seemed to embody the dilemma of liberal Britain, trying to keep its ideals afloat in a tidal wash of consumerism.

The BBC has penetrated life to such a vast extent, it's hard to think of a single institution that has influenced national consciousness to such an extent. From it has derived a rich common stock of jokes, catchphrases, clichés, images. The wonder is not so much why writers haven't written about it, but how they have been able to avoid it.

All of these themes, and a few more, are tackled in *Talk of the City*. The play is set at what Poliakoff reckons was "the most powerful moment at the BBC, probably, just before the War - just because of the technology, so many people had this one instrument in the home". (The period was characterised in Asa Briggs' official history of



Photograph: Piers Beazer

On a brute, practical level, the BBC has been a cultural patron on a scale that makes the Medici look like a gang of philistine tight-wads

the organisation as "The Golden Age of Wireless").

Robbie, the play's central character, is host of a variety programme called "Friday Night at Eight", closely modelled on the real-life *Monday Night at Seven*; music, punter, pre-scripted interviews, a detective story.

Robbie's flair for improvisation places him at odds with the Corporation's rigid approach. Poliakoff places him "in a line that led to Kenny Everett and Chris Evans: anarchic, intelligent people that have a strong streak of self-preservation in them". It also gets him involved with Clive, a senior producer who wants to exploit his talents to alert

people to the plight of Jews in Germany.

The genesis of the play, Poliakoff says, lies in three things - a coincidence and an image. The image - borrowed from *Death at Broadcasting House* - was of showgirls in full, glittering costume lined up in front of a microphone, dressed to the nines for an audience that can't see them. The play contrasts this rehearsed opulence, and the venerability that the BBC had acquired within a few years of starting up, with the experimental poverty of the infant medium of television, a place where you could afford to mess around because virtually nobody was watching.

The coincidence. Poliakoff says, was that "Orson Welles's *War of the Worlds* - which is still I think the most famous media event of the century - happened within five or six weeks of Munich and 10 days before Kristallnacht... If you can terrify the whole of America about an invasion from Mars, an invasion from outer space, you could involve them in what was actually happening in Europe. The huge power of this instrument."

"As a child I remember asking my parents, did you know what was happening in Europe? How much was said?" - that is, how much was said before the Second World War about what the Nazis were doing to the Jews. The BBC broadcast some talks on the subject, but not very many and not of great depth or seriousness.

Poliakoff cites a memo of the period written by John Coatsman, senior news editor, who said that the Corporation "had taken part in a conspiracy of silence". Humphrey Carpenter's history of the Third Programme, *The Envy of the World*, cites an anecdote about the director-general, Frederick Ogilvie, suggesting that Germany could be persuaded to stop persecuting the Jews if the BBC broadcast the celebrated recording of Beethoven's *Harrison* playing the cello in a wood full of nightingales - an incident Poliakoff left out of his play because he felt it was too Monty Pythonish.

What gives *Talk of the City* its punch, though, is simply the lowering presence of the BBC. The picture of good old Aun-

tie Beeb keeping a stiff upper lip and a cheeky twinkle in her eye during the darkest hours of the Blitz is one the Corporation relishes: at other times, as Poliakoff demonstrates, it has been better characterised by its

muddle, snobbery and complacency.

But doesn't this remind you of something else? Doesn't it remind you, just a little bit, of a country you live in? Whatever you think of the BBC, good or

bad, it is the broadcaster that we deserve.

'Talk of the City' is at The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon. For tickets and information, call 01789 295623.

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What gives *Talk of the City* its punch, though, is simply the lowering presence of the BBC. The picture of good old Aun-

Doesn't suit you, sir



Hardy Amies, by appointment to her Majesty the Queen, despairs at the state of menswear today. The 88-year-old explains to Robin Dutt why gentlemen and fashion are incompatible.

SOMETHING is rotten in the state of menswear. And Sir Hardy Amies thinks he just might have the antidote. Attractive though sex is as a pastime, and increasingly, an advertising ploy, it may be that we have overdosed on too much bare flesh or more precisely, honed muscle which sends even the most rational man rushing to the mirror to check his wares. Today, if it's not Gucci or Prada, it's nada in the menswear stakes. Their brand of erotic minimalism – chifon briefs and torso-torturing T-shirts – are the dernier cri for men of every persuasion.

But Sir Hardy cannot get a handle – love or otherwise on this new vogue. His point is that menswear has to be appropriate at all times – elegant, functional and of service to the wearer. Sitting in his office eyrie, the carpet stamped throughout the House with his initials – HA HA running like a mischievous laugh – he has, he feels every right to pronounce on the state of menswear. He has just given a talk about the future of men's clothes to an assembled group of worthies and his stance is rigid to the point of snapping.

It seems that for Hardy, in business since 1934, menswear has made the mistake of being part of the fashion machine. "Fashion in menswear is a contradiction in terms," he says. "I make clothes for gentlemen and gentlemen do not want to look as though they are on a catwalk." Well, to see the pleasure many males take as they parade down the street, the opposite might be true. But then, Sir Hardy is not talking about many males. He is talking about those with "class". And now, we're into deep water where political correctness drowns in five seconds. Sir Hardy bangs on about class like many others trumpet human rights.

The sort of class Sir Hardy is keen on does not necessarily depend on vast quantities of cash. "My clothes are part of an investment wardrobe," asserts Sir Hardy, today impressive in midnight blue blazer and grey flannels. "The whole business should be about helping a man build a wardrobe that has something for every occasion."

Other designers, it seems, get it so wrong. "Never wear shoes with metal on them," he barks. "Dyed grey is a horror and please – no genital buttons on a coat." He regards Edwardian formality as the only way to dress. His philosophy is based on one button – that exactly on the waist. The rest of the suit follows from that central point.

Millennium style for Hardy Amies is, in short, not so dissimilar to that at the end of the last decade. Based solidly on tradition we have Edwardian Ghillie-collar five buttoned jackets, sleek trousers and ties that are very well-behaved. But there are surprises too from menswear director Ian Garland – expect to be able to order long sweeping alpaca coats, chamois jeans and even a leather frockcoat.

OUT OF THE CLOSET



Trevor Sorbie, the celebrity hairdresser, confesses to having a 'thing' about black and also reveals his biggest fashion mistake.

"Black is my favourite colour when it comes to buying clothes. In my opinion it is the most fashionable colour. I think it does favours for people, it always looks chic, is slimming, and never really dates. I have loads of black Issey Miyake suits, which I use for stage presentations and TV appearances. I'm not really a suit person, but I find a suit prevents me from looking like a wimp. When I'm in the salon, however, I generally wear black jeans and T-shirts. I like to keep the atmosphere nice and relaxed, there is nothing more terrible than going to a hairdressers and feeling intimidated the moment you walk through the door."

My biggest fashion blunder is a Hawaiian shirt that I bought in Bali. It's incredibly bright, a mixture of blues, greens and oranges. It looked great when I wore it in Bali, but it just didn't work in London. I felt a bit of a prat wearing it, so I'm saving it for the next time I go to a location where I can blend in. The other thing still in my wardrobe after almost 29 years, is a crocodile-skin studded belt that I used to wear in my teens. I'm afraid it doesn't even fit me now, but at the time it cost £100, which was three wage packets, and for almost that reason alone, I'll never throw it out."

Kate Lloyd



Story:
Tamsin Blanchard
Photographer:
Jon Mortimer
Stylist:
Hannah Hunter

Wide boys wear the trousers

HAVE you got your tape measure ready? Then we'll begin. Measure the circumference of your trousers around the ankle. If they are less than 16 inches, you haven't been paying attention. If they measure 20 inches or over, you either have your tape measure on the pulse, or your wardrobe went into sartorial freeze in 1974. You see, the width of your trousers – if you are male that is – is a talking point again.

"We've moved on from last season's kick leg trousers. Now we're into parallels," says Nick Walker, casualwear buyer at Harvey Nichols. "They're long, wide and the same width all over. How wide? At least 24 inches. Ann Demeulemeester has done really wide ones, but you've got to be a six-footer to wear them. Don't think flares, though. Think relaxed." And think Dolce e Gabbana. (26 inches) Dries Van Noten (21.5 inches) and Prada whose trousers come in three different widths this season.

Wider legs have been billowing about on the catwalks for the past three seasons. It's not so much retro this time as about balance and proportion, although John Rocha for one took inspiration for his collection from George Best circa 1972, full feather-cut and all. But finally, the wide leg has made it off the catwalk, into the high street, and if sales are to be believed, onto the bottoms of men up and down the country. The fit of these trousers is quite precise. This is not just a case of digging out your old Northern Soul strides.

The new flare fits snugly around the bottom rather like last season's flat-fronts and they flare from the thigh, the same width all the way down. They should fall to the floor, covering your shoes, rather like an elephant's foot. The shoes should have no more of a platform than the average pair of trainers. They are more Cary Grant than Bay City Rollers.

Most fashion trends for women are designed for the six-

foot giant. For once, here is a trend that is equally unkind to men. Ideally, you should be six-foot six, and you should have a perfectly formed, pertier-than-pert derrière. According to Nick Sullivan, associate editor of *Arena*, your upper body should be bigger than your hum. "I can't wear them," says Sullivan, who is six foot. "They make me look about four-foot tall. You need to be lean."

Chris Bailey, head of design for Jigsaw Menswear, has plumped squarely for the parallel option this season. "We introduced them with a drawstring last summer and with a 24-inch hem in flannel for last autumn," he says. Most customers are getting used to the new shape quite quickly. "They're easy to wear with trainers and a T-shirt," says Bailey although he is also trying to introduce a new-style suit for summer: a fitted short-sleeve shirt with the trousers all in the same fabric. "These are not high waisted at all. They're semi-hipsters." Bailey puts the new trend down to a reaction against the narrow, mod suits that have been dominating fashion in the mid-Nineties. "This is a more relaxed look. You can chuck on a pair of looser fitting trousers and wear them with a slim-fit T-shirt."

The time is right. "Two years ago, we couldn't have sold them," he says. Now the stores from Manchester to Covent Garden can't stock up fast enough. And if you can't quite stomach the idea of venturing forth in a pair of parallel slacks, don't worry. By autumn, Jigsaw will have moved onto a new shape. According to Chris Bailey they are "wide but very short, about 6 inches above the ankle". It would appear choosing a pair of trousers has become a matter of geometry. Once you've stood in front of the mirror and sized up your physique, not to mention the shape of your behind, you are ready to go shopping. Don't forget your tape measure.

Mark Hayman, 28, designer, top left. Wear different things to work, from jogging bottoms to suits. Trousers quite cool but wouldn't buy them because mates would take the piss out of me – they're too camp. Maybe wear in evening more than day.

... Navy wide-leg linen trousers, £76, from Jigsaw; as before; blue t-shirt, £35, Muji; as before; trainers models own.

Mustapha Merzouk, 35, manager of Joe's Café, top right. Wears Joseph suits for work. Likes 70s style, would buy them, though wouldn't have picked this outfit: "I wouldn't normally buy these, but after trying them, I feel more comfortable in this style."

Viscose cream sweater, £119 Nicole Farhi; Charcoal linen trousers, £225, Dries Van Noten at Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1, 0171-584 0011; shoes, model's own.

Nick, photographer, 30, centre left. "For work, I wear any trousers or T-shirts that are clean. I would wear trousers this wide, although they are out of my price range. Liked the fit and cut."

Grey brushed-cotton t-shirt, £34, Jigsaw, 27 Brook Street, London W1, 0171-

499 2521; Navy linen trousers, £165, Dolce e Gabbana, from Harvey Nichols, as before, trainers model's own.

John Harrison, black and white processor, 29, centre right and bottom. Wouldn't wear white D&G trousers – a bit too camp. Normally wears baggy trousers, but not as wide as these. Preferred the wider D&G fit to the Jigsaw ones.

White sailor-style cotton trousers, £40, Dolce e Gabbana, as before; Navy ribbed cotton top, £35, Muji, 187 Oxford Street London W1, enquiries 0171-437 7503; sandals by Clon, £110, from Jones, 13 Floral Street, London WC2E 9DH, enquiries 0171 240 8312.

Cream chino-style trousers, £79, Jigsaw, as before; brown t-shirt, £49, Nicole Farhi, as before; models own trainers.

Jason Morris, 27, artist relations manager, main picture. I never wear baggy trousers. In this outfit I feel like a Madonna dancer from the "Express Yourself" tour.

Grey pinstripe linen trousers, £225, Dolce e Gabbana, as before; sleeveless white top, £30, by dust from Burro, 19a Floral Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DS; trainers model's own.

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Life with the Only Ones

In China, the policy of only allowing one child per family is being relaxed. In Britain and the West, a single child is becoming the norm. Glenda Cooper reports

CHELSEA CLINTON is not just the First Child, but the Only Child, too. So were Enoch Powell, Norma Major, and Sandra Shaw. There are now 2.75m single offspring in our country, according to the 1991 Census, and recent figures from the Office for National Statistics reveal that two-parent families are now more likely to have only children than ever before.

But what is the effect of being a Little Emperor in your own home, cosseted and cherished by doting parents? In China, which has 65m only children, thanks to its one-child-per-family policy, the first generation of single Chinese children is attaining its majority – the policy was introduced in 1979 – and experts have worried about creating a generation of spoilt and competitive children.

Now, just as our numbers

of only children increase, the Chinese have announced a formal relaxation of the one-child policy in a pilot programme in rural areas. Instead, family planning officials will try the gentler methods of education and persuasion as a means of encouraging voluntary contraceptive use and restricting the birth rate.

Little research has been done here on the consequences of growing up without siblings and their rivalries, and being put at the mercy of parents' hopes and ambitions. Only children are usually singletons for one of two reasons. The first is choice: their affluent parents decide not to have several offspring, because they don't want the cost or the pressures of child-rearing. The other is necessity: they really can't afford it or they have left having children so late in life

that they are unable to have more than one.

But studies indicate that only children do not communicate as well as other children. Dr Charles Lewis of the Department of Psychology at the University of Lancaster says: "Singletons have a smaller social network and they are not always very good at adapting themselves... Most have parent-centred lives. It may have prevented them realising what it is to be involved in social communications."

Matthew Brace, a travel writer, says he can spot an only child, with his or her confidence and self-assurance, anywhere. "They are sharp-witted, with a creative streak and tend to be dreamers." He is unequivocal about his own experience. "Given the choice, I wouldn't have been an only child. You feel desperately lonely; you are forced to make up your



Chelsea Clinton: First Child, only child

own games and adventures. I think that is why most only children I know are creative. The most painful thing of all is that when there are family troubles you've just got yourself and, as

any psychiatrist will tell you, there is only so much talking you should do to yourself. It can be a great burden."

Frank Gould (not his real name) disagrees. "I've never

regretted being an only child," he said. "You don't get all the tensions that you get with brothers and sisters, the sort of arguments you find as you get older about who is going to look after your parents. If there is more than two of you, I'm sure people gang up and bitch about each other."

He feels that he did not make friends to compensate for not having siblings; indeed, he revelled in the privacy it allowed him. "I liked never having to share my toys."

"The first-time parent may have a problem with confidence and have much more doubt about their ability to cope with children," says child expert Dr Richard Woolfson. "But I think only children develop very well now that parents are aware of the stereotypes. Most parents now say they are going to make damn sure their child doesn't have a

problem socialising when they start school.

"Certainly birth order is a significant determinant of personality because of the influence of early years up to five. It is a big factor because to have two children is still the norm."

Frank Sulloway is the author of *Born To Rebel*, which investigates the significance of birth order. As part of his research, he looked at studies of 1m subjects, leaving him to conclude that first-borns tend to be tough-minded and ambitious while conservative with a small 'c', whereas younger children tend to be more rebellious and radical in order to grab attention – the classic cases, he thinks, being Robert Spier (first-born) and Danton (younger son).

"Only children occupy a niche in their family. There is no competition to explore, but that makes them more un-

predictable in psychological terms. They probably have more idiosyncrasy because they have the freedom to explore," he concludes.

Both Frank and Matthew agree: "I do think only children are more creative," says Matthew. "But it's because you are by yourself so you have to make up adventures or whatever to amuse yourself."

Frank thinks that only children do tend to be more intellectual. "I think they are more literary, certainly, because you read books rather than spend time fighting with brothers."

Asked whether they would worry about their own offspring being only children, both Matthew and Frank plumped for larger families. "I wouldn't worry about it but I wouldn't want just one child," says Frank. "If I had kids, I'd never ever have an only child. I'd want three or four," adds Matthew.

Who's who in the literary premierships

Ted Heath and John Major are completing their long-awaited political memoirs. They get the money, but what does the reader get? Sean O'Grady leafs through the pages

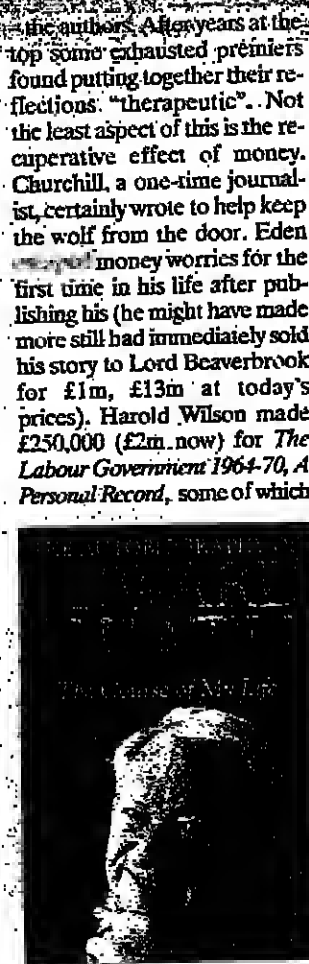
ONE of the longest gestations in autobiographical history has drawn to a close. A few days ago, the final corrections were made to the manuscript of *The Course of My Life*, the memoirs of Sir Edward Heath. Almost a quarter of a century after he left Number 10, Ted will, at the Tory party conference in Bournemouth this October, launch a 650-page volume of political memoirs.

The 300,000+ words chronicle a long political career which began at Oxford in the 1930s, and we are promised "a revealing panoply of twentieth-century political, international and social history".

The former prime minister is said to have been writing his memoirs for many years. As long ago as 1985 he was promising to "spill every uncensored detail". A previous publisher's advance had been returned, and a project with the BBC a few years ago foundered (although there will be a television spin-off now). It has been suggested that one reason for the delay was that he could not come to terms with his losing the premiership and the leadership of his party. But the expectation that he should have written his version as soon as he left office is, in historical terms at least, unfounded.

The idea of a routine set of prime ministerial memoirs is relatively new. The very earliest example of the genre was a volume written by Sir Robert Peel who arranged for his book to be published after his death (which seems an awful long way round to avoid poor reviews). HH Asquith was the first lengthy account, while Sir Winston Churchill wrote extensively (*My Early Life* is the only political memoir to have been made into a biopic, *Young Winston*). But all of our post-war leaders have or have promised to produce a set of memoirs varying from the very long (Eden, Macmillan) through long (Wilson, Thatcher) to relatively brief (Attlee, Home, Callaghan). As we look forward to Ted's this autumn and John Major's next year, we might look at previous form to ask, are they worth writing? Can they be both?

The answer to the first question is "sometimes", the second, "yes" and the third "no". First



of this is my case. This can have a paranoid tinge. Harold Wilson wrote that "I did not want historians to have to rely on what they read in an entirely hostile set of newspapers. There was hardly a single editor or writer who had a clue about how government was run and I was intent that the record should be put straight". Despite, or possibly because of, the fact that former premiers are given privileged access to official papers from their time, while "proper" historians have to wait 30 years, they often commit sins of omission or commission that tend to cast doubt on the whole exercise.

Asquith's treatment of the struggle for votes for women (two pages in two volumes) reveals much about his attitude but is still a bit skimpy. In his chronicles of the last war, Churchill made no mention of Ultra, the code cracking device which helped the Allies in a number of crucial campaigns. Eden and Macmillan's accounts of the Suez affair omit to mention their collusion with the Israelis. (Ted's forthcoming account will be the last of the players' versions of events). Mrs Thatcher's comprehensive-to-the-point-of-chronology *The Downing Street Years* doesn't spend much time on some of the juicier aspects of the Westland Affair that led to Michael Heseltine's (and nearly her own) resignation and misses out the Spycatcher affair entirely.

Generosity to former "colleagues" (especially to those still alive and thus with access to the libel courts) is also a general rule. However Margaret Thatcher's contain more straight put-downs than all the others put together. Although she could be kind to some – James Callaghan was a "brilliant opponent", she was not so to others, especially those she called "those grandees". "Michael Heseltine's sense of priorities was gravely distorted by his personal obsessions", Jim Prior was the "false squire", whilst "in following Peter Carrington with Francis Pym as Foreign Secretary I had exchanged an amusing whiff for a gloomy one".

But the nastiest handbagging is reserved for the grandest of the grandees. "I had no doubt



	Title	Success/reception	The exciting bits	Memory failure	Best put-down	Romance
Winston Churchill	<i>My Early Life 1930; History of the Second World War 1948-54</i>	Majestic, regarded as literature, but offended some (see Best put-down).	Escaping from a Boer POW camp and being wanted "dead or alive" with a price of £25 on his head.	Omits the "Ultra" code breaking system which helped to win the war.	Poles and Poland: "Ingratitude over the centuries has led them through measureless suffering and 'too often led by the vilest of the vile'."	"Events were soon to arise... which were to absorb my thoughts and energies until 1908, when I married and lived happily ever after."
Clement Attlee	<i>As It Happened 1954</i>	As dry and laconic as the man himself. Disappointed reviewers by revealing very little.	Labour's 1945 landslide and the dawn of the new Jerusalem – "quite an exciting day".	Terse about everything. Second World War (when he was deputy Prime Minister) gets just 30 pages.	On Ramsay MacDonald: "His habit of telling me the poor opinion he had of many of his Cabinet colleagues made an unpleasant impression."	Unexpectedly sweet if brief tale about courting Violet (a lifelong Tory) in Italy and Richmond Park.
Alec Douglas-Home	<i>The Way The Wind Blows 1976</i>	Surprisingly good, considering his reticence. As much about angling as politics.	Meeting Hitler. "I noticed that his arms swung low, almost to his knees. It gave him a curiously animal appearance."	The Suez affair. How he won the Tory leadership and became PM in 1963. No photograph of him with Neville Chamberlain.	"Enoch Powell had a fine mind which I flattered myself I could have harnessed to constructive policies. Perhaps I was wrong."	Married daughter of his Headmaster at Eton. "We became engaged, having been to Epsom together and won the Tote double."
Harold Wilson	<i>The Labour Government 1964-70: A Personal Record 1971; Final Term 1979; The Making of a Prime Minister 1986</i>	David Dimbleby asked him about his money. Wilson demanded why he didn't interrogate Heath about where he got money for yachts.	Midnight car drive with Charles de Gaulle to try to secure British entry into Europe.	Nothing on security services' plots to oust him. Little explanation of Marcia Williams' influence.	"I was taking a risk with George Brown. It was not that he drank more than anyone else but that he could not hold it."	"Told Mary I was going to become an MP and, indeed, PM. Had she believed this it would have been the end of a promising romance."
Edward Heath	<i>The Course of My Life 1998</i>	Already savaged by Thatcherites. Uningenious praise from the left.	Second World War, Suez.	Why he lost so many elections.	Wilson, Thatcher, Enoch Powell	Nil
James Callaghan	<i>Time and Chance (biobibli)</i> 1987	Brian Walden took him apart, otherwise reasonable. His biographer, Kenneth D Morgan says they are taken seriously by historians.	Killing off "In Place of Sir" Barbara Castle's attempt to reform the unions and rebase their relationship with Labour.	Julian Hodge, the controversial financier with whose Commercial Bank of Wales with he was associated for a time.	The Gang of Four: "It was deeply disappointing that prominent former members of my Cabinet should have deserted to the SDP."	Fell in love with the 16-year-old Audrey in 1929. "I felt she was quite unlike anyone I had ever met before. I still think so."
Margaret Thatcher	<i>The Downing Street Years 1993; The Path to Power 1995</i>	Made enough money to fund the Thatcher Foundation. Helped to wreck Major's premiership.	The leadership contests in 1975 and 1990. Beating the enemy without the Falklands War and the enemy within (Arthur Scargill).	Not much at all about her mother Beatrice. Little on Westland. The Spycatcher affair is missed out altogether.	Neil Kinnock. Her last Cabinet, guilty of "treachery with a smile". Corrects Christ's Sermon on the Mount.	"More than 40 years later I know that my decision to say yes to Denis was one of the best I ever made."
John Major	<i>Sticky Wicket?</i>	Predictable sneering. Probably will be written too early to see his rehabilitation.	Growing up with gnomes.	Don't expect him to be forthcoming on his conversations with Heseltine before he became Deputy PM in 1995.	The Bastards.	Electric meetings with Norma after affair with older woman.

Statesmen hope their testaments will defend their reputations from assassination

was spent on the running of his office as Leader of the Opposition. There has been some fuss about the reputed sums offered to John Major for his memoirs (up to £600,000) but if anything he is probably undersold.

But all these statesmen would probably write something even if there were no advance or serialisation rights on the table. Like soldiers whose lives are saved by the bible in their tunic that stops the sniper's bullet, they hope that their testaments will defend their reputations from political assassination. Or, as Winston Churchill put it, "this is not his-

that Ted now ought to go. He had lost three elections out of four. He himself could not change and he was too defensive of his own past record to see that a fundamental change of policies was needed. Every-one except Ted knew that the main political problem was the fact that he was still leader".

Ted has had two years since this appeared in Margaret Thatcher's *The Path to Power*. He has no doubt a robust defence. But his timing also helps him here. When the last volume of Harold Macmillan's memoirs were published in 1973, ten years had passed since his resignation. The age of Supermae had attained a golden glow. People had forgotten the "sleaze" of Profumo and the failures of policy. Why? Because we were by then living through what felt like a much less successful period of Conservative government under

one Edward Heath. When in power he was seen as an abrasive, divisive, stubborn character.

But now, as with Macmillan's historical embarrassments, we seem inclined to only remember his administration kindly. There are few around now who remember or care much about bitter but obscure historical struggles like the Upper Clyde shipbuilders, the Clay Cross martyrs or even the three-day week. But they do just about know that he took us into Europe and, hard though it is for any of those who have endured his sometimes distant manner, he is "cuddly", like the pandas he used to bring back from China.

Most important of all, events in Europe have been moving inexorably Ted's way. Pressure of events may see us in the Euro before Ted is finished with the House of Com-

mons. It looks like he, and not "that woman", will end up on the winning side. We should not expect him to remind us. This has the capacity to touch some raw nerves. Publishers often try to get political books out in time for the party conferences, for obvious reasons. Poor William Hague and his party managers will no doubt remember the unhelpful effect that the leaking of Margaret Thatcher's memoirs had during the 1993 Conservative Conference. Let us recall the reference to the then Prime Minister in the index to *The Downing Street Years*: "Major, John... suitability as successor to MT". History is as important in the Tory party of today as it used to be for Labour or the Irish.

Old, near-extinct volcanoes they may be, but they can still provide an entertaining, noisy spectacle.

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ANC's lesson for Sinn Fein

COMMENTATORS and politicians, especially left-wing ones, have long made slightly facile comparisons between Northern Ireland and various other troubled parts of the world. The Good Friday agreement and the visit of ministers in the South African government as an ANC delegation to Belfast have provided an ideal opportunity for the drawing of some more of these parallels. And, to be fair, we can appreciate the temptation. There are some neat – and telling – comparisons to be made. Ulster's plantation Protestants and the Boer settlers of southern Africa do have some things in common, and not just a desire on both their parts to live in Orange Free States. Both groups were immigrants and a minority amongst the people they found themselves sharing a land with. They developed via a separate evolutionary branch from those they left behind. There is the odd cultural parallel – fundamentalist, puritanical religion and a "no surrender" or *imager* mentality. The Stormont regime which ruled Ulster for five decades was guilty of exclusivism and gerrymandering and a casual attitude to civil rights, although it is right to say that it was not exactly in the same league as the complete denial of human rights that was apartheid. The Ulstermen and the *voortrekkers* both, perhaps with reason, distrusted the British. They also shared a less than sure touch in terms of public relations, but they could prove to be canny negotiators.

But illuminating about the character of some Ulstermen as they may be, it remains that Northern Ireland is not South Africa. The Good Friday agreement was not about finding a Nelson Mandela figure in Gerry Adams. David Trimble is not FW de Klerk. Ian Paisley is not Chief Buthe. The very idea is comical. The Northern Irish Unionists are a majority in that political entity. Whatever the historical legitimacy of the six counties it is now a political fact of life. Northern Ireland should remain in the United Kingdom for as long as a majority of its people so wish. The worst excesses of the old days of the Orange statelet have gone. The civil and political rights and cultural recognition – "parity of esteem" – that the nationalist minority yearned for are now, give or take a few hiccups, taken for granted, as they should be.

So the situation in Northern Ireland is not closely analogous to South Africa. Or, we might add, the Middle East. Or, heaven help us, Bosnia or Zaire. Except in the one crucial respect. Thus far only the South Africans have managed anything like a stable transition to a new politics. This single dimension is the only point of comparison that is really worth making. And that is why the visit of the ANC dignitaries could prove valuable.

In fact this is not the first time that the South Africans have given the Northern Irish a master class in reconciliation. Last year, Ulster politicians met them in the Cape.

We can only suppose that it did them some good, despite, or possibly because of, the lively talk that it generated out in the bush. At least they saw working a future that many could not have foreseen. So what can the ANC help with now?

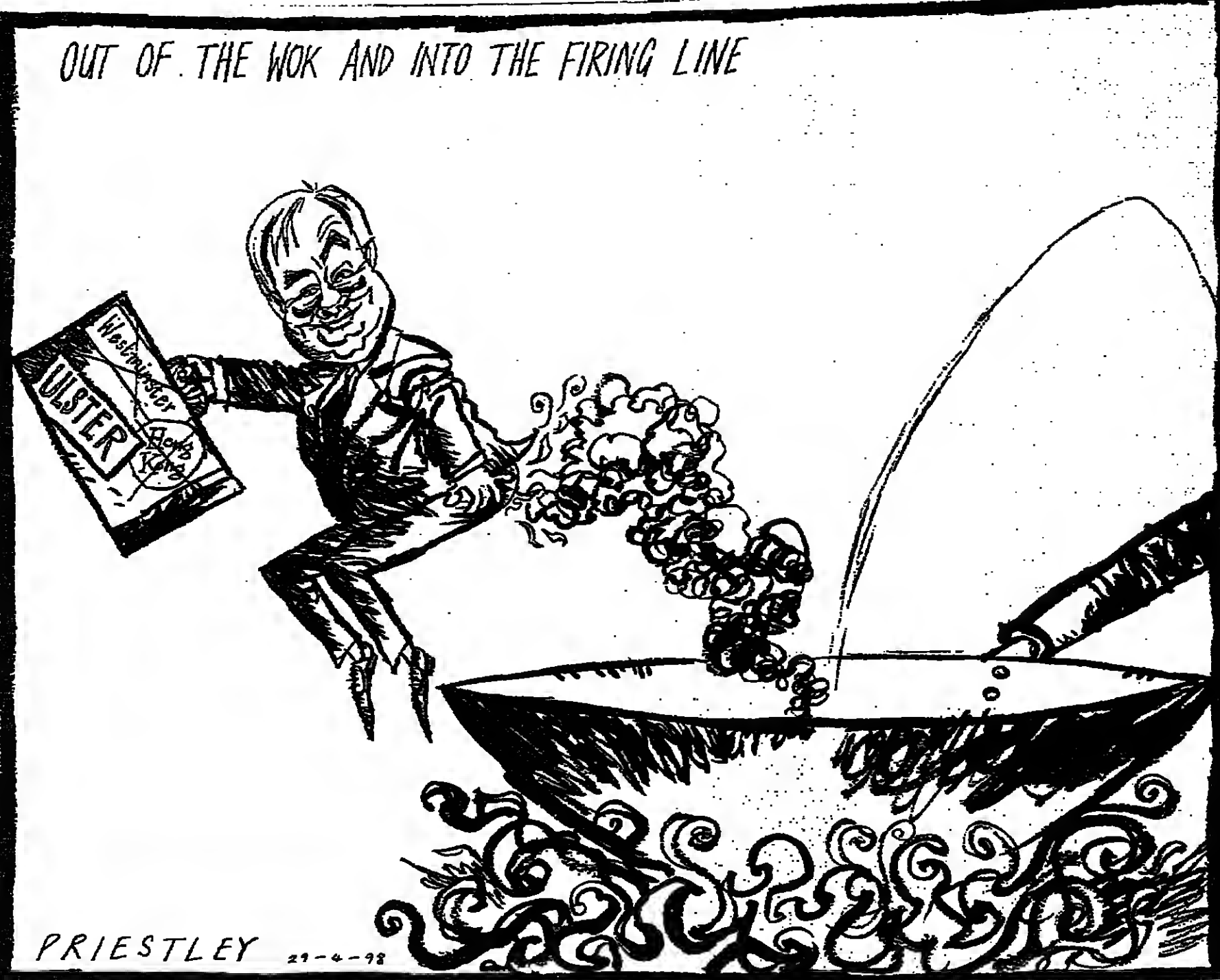
The most difficult of the issues is decommissioning. This was one of the main sticking points during the reform process in South Africa. Again it is worth stating that the Provisional IRA is not the military or moral equivalent of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto weSizwe. Whatever case there might have been behind the armed struggle in South Africa no such case exists in a place where democratic politics are practised. Here the analogy, if read across literally, is probably positively damaging. It would not really be on, for example, to integrate IRA and UDA men into the RUC or the Army. Quite apart from any practicalities there is the small question of confidence in the peace process. Even the loosest talk of this kind would do no one any favours for the coming referendum.

The process of demilitarising Northern Ireland needs to go ahead sooner rather than later. We hope that the ANC will be advising Sinn Fein to help with that process by moving on this issue if they do then they will soon see the end of troops patrolling the streets. That is the real lesson of the South African peace process. As Nelson Mandela said: "As long as there are men and women on all sides who are able to rise above feeling for revenge, men and women who can put the future of their children first, who can put terrible episodes behind them in order to move on, this process can work as ours eventually did." Then these two parts of the world will have the most important thing in common – peace.

Party leaders run neck and neck

WHO CHOOSES William Hague's ties? Ffion, usually. She must have good taste. Mr Hague is an official Top Tie Wearer. His favourite appears to be bright yellow with blue and red flowers. We shouldn't be surprised at the turn of events. The leader of the Opposition has always been a smartly turned-out lad. The latest glittering prize (a tie pin) is a fitting tribute to his elegance. Indeed he may be beginning to rival his immaculately dressed aide Alan Duncan. We are certainly pleased that he has resisted the temptation to "dress down" as he "reaches out" with his fresh start. He must surely remember the bad press that his predecessor sometimes endured over his grey pin-striped chain-store suits. Mr Hague admires Lady Thatcher, who warded off allegations of frumpiness by boosting her wardrobe at Aquascutum.

In this contest, at least, Mr Hague seems to have had little competition from the Prime Minister. Mr Blair did, after all, once have to deny that his spin-doctors chose his ties for him for their value as a political gesture to middle England. This was supposed to be the reason why he habitually wore a blue number during the last election. We are happy to believe that it was just the first one that came to hand in the morning. But a fiercely competitive couple like the Blairs cannot afford to let the Hagues win any skirmish in the style wars. It is the Prime Minister's 45th birthday next Wednesday. Guess what Cherie's getting him.



German right turn

THE RESULTS of the German state elections in Saxony-Anhalt are not only worrying because of the extreme right's 12 per cent in the polls. The success of the extreme right DVU also indicates problems for the established parties.

East German discontent among young "new voters" with established politics was not channelled into votes for the socialist PDS, which fosters its East German identity among voters, but to a West German organisation campaigning mainly via letters and posters. Furthermore, the failure of the Social Democrats to gain more electoral support given the chaos and disintegration among the Christian Democrats provides further evidence that the so-called "Schröder effect" might have less substance than initially thought. Thus, while this state election and the 12 per cent vote for an extreme-right party might seem to be a footnote in history after the general election in September, the failure of the established parties to grasp the economic and social despair of a volatile East German electorate will not disappear that rapidly.

MARTIN LODGE
Department of Government
London School of Economics

DESIGNER Nazism, perhaps, (report, 28 April) but that ignores a dangerous undercurrent of anti-foreigner sentiment that has always had wide support in eastern Germany – nurtured by resentment at unfulfilled promises and unrealistic expectations by the eastern Germans themselves.

Sadly, that resentment against foreigners was all too obvious in the three years I spent as a company director in Frankfurt (Oder), near the Polish border. Attempts to nurture a cross-border culture (I was involved in many of these projects) were continuously sabotaged by a cross-class antipathy towards Poland that has its roots in German history.

Even I – a good WASP – experienced many verbal attacks and had my car door kicked in – and not by the skinheads but rather by more "respectable" members of society. The hostility frequently displayed towards my Indian girlfriend during her

visits to Frankfurt effectively prevented her from ever moving there.

All in all, an unpleasant experience, but how much worse for eastern German residents of other race. It really is time for the "silent majority" in eastern Germany to quash this nasty spectre and to take responsibility for their society and its future in an international community.

KRIS SCHNACK
Richmond, Surrey

Books about criminals

SHOULD convicted criminals profit from writing books about their crime? This is not an easy question and the recent controversy over publications related to Mary Bell is not surprising. But we were surprised to read that the Home Secretary is looking at changes to the law to prevent them from doing so (report, 27 April).

The law is already in place. The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (s.93A) makes it a money-laundering offence for any person to assist a criminal to deal with his or her proceeds of crime or makes proceeds available to the criminal. This has been the law since February 1995 and it applies to crime carried out before the Act came into force (s.103(4)). What is more, the proceeds (whether generated for the person who renders the assistance or the criminal) are liable to be confiscated (s.71-72).

There is no doubt that proceeds of crime in this context includes profits from publication of a book about the commission of crime. See the litigation in 1991 surrounding the proceeds of the publication of the book about George Blake's escape from prison (Randle and Poner (1991), *Independent Law Reports*, 26 March).

Consequently, it is open to the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute a convicted criminal (as an aider and abettor) and the publishers of the convicted criminal's publications for money-laundering. If

LETTERS

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convicted each is liable to confiscation of the proceeds of the publication. If the publisher has not yet paid any money to the criminal but is proposing to make a payment, it is open to the Attorney General to apply to the High Court for an injunction to restrain the payment under the general power of the court to enjoin the commission of crime, namely money-laundering.

ANDREW MITCHELL
KENNEDY TALBOT
Barristers
London EC4

Abbey sacking

I WRITE to express dismay at the dismissal of my friend Dr Martin Neary as Organist and Master of the Chorists at Westminster Abbey.

For his inspired selection and conducting of the funeral music for Diana, Princess of Wales, Martin earned not just the nation's but the whole world's gratitude and admiration, while only last month, at Westminster Abbey's memorial service for Sir George Solti, he offered further proof of his eminence in the musical life of this country. He conducted Kodaly's powerful *Missa Brevis* and the little-known but lovely Bruckner motet (his own suggestion) which began what proved to be another very moving ceremony.

Three years ago, Dr Neary made an important contribution to the celebrations devised around the tercentenary of his most famous predecessor at the abbey, the composer Henry Purcell. Purcell had his problems with the dean and chapter of the day, but the authorities were wise enough not to dispense with his services as a consequence.

To terminate in such a brutal manner Dr Neary's contribution to British musical life seems a grave miscarriage of natural justice. I urge the Dean, Dr Wesley Carr, and his colleagues to avoid the embarrassment

and delays surrounding a personal appeal to the Queen by working out, even at this late hour, an accommodation which would demonstrate the Dean's magnanimity and retain for the abbey the services of a most distinguished musician.

HUMPHREY BURTON
London W14

Price of education

IN CRITICISING my reference (letter, 21 April) to price sensitivity in higher education, Professor Sir Graham Hills (letter, 23 April) makes the extraordinary claim that "there are no prices in higher education".

The students who are unable to attend all of their classes because they take jobs in order to reduce their debts are paying a price; twice over. Applications to Scottish universities from students based in the Republic of Ireland are down by 33 per cent next year: we have just introduced tuition fees, while the Republic has just abolished them! The prices are there, but perhaps you only notice them if your resources are scarce.

Professor Hills should not confuse the method of salary determination for academics with the important question of where the necessary resources should come from. I could agree with him that students are (eventually) important beneficiaries of higher education. However, the main beneficiaries are the majority of our citizens who gain from the productive work of the scientists, engineers and other professionals who contribute to our civilised society. That is what we all pay our taxes for. The business sector benefits more than most from higher education. This is why the AUT has suggested that business should contribute more.

P K BURGESS
Immediate Past-President
Association of University Teachers
Dundee

Snowdonia railway

I AM surprised at the objections by the Ramblers and others to the prospect of a new railway through the Snowdonia National Park (report, 27 April).

Railways are in principle far better than roads as a means of access to national parks. The visual impact of a track with occasional trains is much less than that of a road with random traffic of equivalent people-density. Roads and car parks take up hugely more macadamised surface area than rails and stations. Rail travellers will not spoil the view by parking machinery in unauthorised places.

If Snowdonia has an inheritance of railway alignments, a huge investment by our great-grandparents, it should take advantage of the new generation of cheap, bus-sized, railcars and get tougher with cars (smaller car parks, higher charges, no stopping elsewhere and so on).

ANDREW GORDON
Banbury, Oxfordshire

Labour menace

THE prospect of Labour MPs doorstep voters, or worse, catching them out with cold call telephone techniques (leading article, 22 April), is not one which will be welcomed by most members of the public. If it is intended that there should be 100 such victims a week, does this herald a new era where the traditional doorstep enemies – Jehovah's Witnesses, door-to-door salesmen, and charity collectors – will be eclipsed by slick and youthful New Labour representatives? My only hope is that it rains on "Cool Britannia".

MATTHEW GOLD
Wolverhampton, West Midlands

BSE: the truth at last

LET ME get this straight. BSE is not the fault of farmers, it's not the fault of the Ministry of Agriculture or consumers and it's certainly not the fault of the animal-feed manufacturers ("Feed firms deny causing BSE", 28 April). Well that just leaves one involved party: it must be the cows' fault.

ANDREW McILRAE
London SW15

Coals to Coventry? Modern cliché-mongers can do even better



MILES KINGSTON

THE OTHER day on Radio 4's *The News Quiz* Jeremy Hardy was questioning the use of the phrase, "The doctor was handing out pills as if they were Smarties", and said it was nonsensical, because he had never come across a doctor who handed out Smarties to patients.

I expect this is probably because most of the doctors who started by handing out Smarties to their patients are now behind bars, but that apart, I think Jeremy Hardy is quite right to feel fed by the unthinking use of such phrases. There are lots of these worn-out images referring to different kinds of activity which started out fresh and colourful and have ended up as tired and sagging clichés. A lot of them have been around so long we hardly even think what they mean any more. Sending people to Coventry... taking coals to Newcastle... spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar... putting the cart before the horse... we still use these expres-

sions as automatically as we eat crisps. Why haven't we got any more modern activities to refer to, something a bit more recent than taking coals to Newcastle?

Well, we have, is the answer, and they have become clichés already. Here's an example. Opening envelopes. If a person gets a reputation for going to every party he or she can get invited to, whether it is a launch, start of a show or first night, what do we say? We say, "He would turn up for the opening of an envelope." The first time we heard it, we thought it was quite funny. The second, we thought, Oh, it's catching on. The tenth time, we thought, Yeah, yeah, all right. The fifteenth time, we thought, Oh, COME ON!

Another example. When something is really boring, really boring, really REALLY boring, what would you rather do instead? "It was so boring, I would actually rather have... rather have..." what? Watched paint dry?

That's it! Watching paint dry and going to the opening of an envelope. No more, please.

Ditto standing to the right of Genghis Khan. He's so reactionary, he's to the right of... yes, Genghis Khan. Couldn't we at least vary it a bit? I long to hear someone described as being to the right of Tamburlaine the Great, or even Attila the Hun, but no – even there we have to stick to the same old tyrant.

Here's another one, which I think I heard on *Loose Ends* recently. (Well, it's a theatrical cliché, so it must have been.) When a man has so much charisma, so much aura, so much magic that whatever he does is fascinating, what would people pay to watch him do? Got it? "He is such a great performer that people would pay to hear him read the telephone directory." I suppose that means read it out loud, as a performer would have to be stunningly charismatic for anyone to want to watch him read it to himself.

But the most wonderful activity-based

cliché of all is the one that concerns inefficiency. Yes, inefficiency. It is often said of someone that he is so incompetent that he couldn't... he couldn't... (has everyone shouted out the answer by now?) he is so incompetent that he couldn't organise a... a what? ... Very good! A piss-up in a brewery!

Well, now, to be serious for a minute, my father was a brewer, and I hung around the brewery a lot in my early days, and I never remember anyone having anything remotely like a piss-up in the brewery. There was so much alcohol in the air, and so much beer generally available, that I'm sure everyone was faintly stewed the whole time and the draymen more than somewhat, but there didn't seem much point in having a piss-up there. It's the last place you'd want to have a bit of a knees-up. There would be no point. It would be a bit like having a fancy dress party in Madame Tussaud's. The nearest my

father ever got to having a piss-up in the brewery was retiring to the sample cellar with his chums, trying a half pint of the latest brew, and discussing where, outside the brewery, they might have a bit of a time. My father would sometimes come home from pub events (darts matches, etc) a little merry but from the brewery, never.

Or hardly ever.

Or, as he used to say, once every Preston Guild.

Now, THERE'S a cliché which has never quite become hackneyed.

I give you the toast. Down with giving out Smarties, opening envelopes, watching paint dry, standing next to Genghis Khan, piss-ups in breweries and up with the Preston Guild. Whatever that is.

A reader writes: Hold on, hold on! Have you written this entire article just to ask readers to explain a Preston Guild to you?

Miles Kingston writes: Yes.

Why I'll be voting 'no' in the referendum for a London mayor



JAMES
McRAE

POWER TO
THE BOROUGH

AT THE RISK of sounding deeply unfashionable, it seems to me to be nuts for London to have a mayor.

We are going to get one, of course. The whole publicity campaign to pick one - the anvil of names, the "what I would do" articles by possible candidates, the TV debate - is founded on the presumption that it is a good idea. It is also quite difficult to argue the case against executive action: while people will accept the general proposition that more bureaucracy is a bad thing, when they are presented with specific goodies such as "we will co-ordinate transport policies" they tend not to see that as bureaucrats intervening in the market.

So, anyone making the case against has a hard job. But there seem to me to be at least seven reasons why, at best, the appointment of a mayor is irrelevant to London's needs, and, at worst, will actually be damaging to its economy.

The starting point of the case against is "it ain't broke, don't fix it". The London economy has had a very successful run in recent years. Perhaps the best measure of the success of a place is whether people go and live there, and the low point in London's population was reached in the early 1980s. Since then, it has been rising slowly. I would not claim that this revival is the direct result of the abolition of the GLC, but it does show that the economy can prosper under the present arrangement.

Point two flows from this. One of the effects of getting rid of a single political body for London has been to create greater competition between the boroughs. They have more functions, attract more attention and, gradually, have lifted the quality of their performance. Of course, not all are wonderful: far from it. But there is a much greater emphasis on competent administration at a borough level than there was under the old system. Recreating a mayor will inevitably attract political attention, and since the space of mind Londoners are prepared to devote to local politics is very limited, some will be drawn away from the boroughs.

Three, the borough system is particularly suited to London, for it has never been a single region. Historically, it is a two-centre town, with Westminster handling the administrative business of the country and the City handling the money side. The rest of the agglomeration consisted of small towns and villages, which merely happen to be physically connected, and which have now grown to the size of cities. The large London boroughs have bigger populations than some countries: Bromley is bigger in population than Iceland. Now, I am not suggesting that Bromley should have a seat at the United Nations, merely that the bor-

oughs are quite big enough to be developed as important political entities, attracting good people and helping foster more vibrant local communities.

Instead, point four, we will create a new focus of power, which sadly will also be a new seed-bed for corruption. This will not happen straightaway but gradually emerge, for any list of politicians will turn up wrong 'uns: the Tories had their share of sleaze and even the squeaky-clean New Labour lot are starting to fray at the edges. Even if mayors one and two prove okay, sooner or later there will be the little feathering of nests that sadly characterise local politics everywhere. Why create a new focus for corruption when we don't need to?

Why also, point five, create a new focus for waste? People inevitably spend other people's money with slightly less attention than they do their own. However cautious, however wise these people prove to be, there will be some waste. Someone is going to want the equivalent of the Lord Chancellor's new wallpaper.

And someone else has to pay for it, point six. Who? The answer, and it does not matter how the money is collected, must be the private sector. But, of course, the main improvements in London over the past 15 years have been in private sector services: everything from better restaurants and smarter shops to the great clubbing industry. Having a new political body will inevitably cost some money. Necessary items such as housing or food are not going to get any cheaper.

So the money to pay for the mayor, the support staff, the offices, the limousines and so on will come out of this discretionary spending on private sector services. The most vibrant bit of the London economy will have

What's needed is not top-down politics, but bottom-up commercial acumen

to make a disproportionate contribution to the bill.

Even concerning the things where a mayor might be thought to have a useful co-ordinating role, there are reasons to suspect that an injection of politics may do more harm than good. Take transport, point seven. There is a general perception that London's public transport is bad, which seems to me to be unfair as people compare it with cities as Paris and Tokyo. There is certainly room for improvement, but the system is better than New York and Los Angeles, and about the same as Paris and Tokyo. But the bits which work rather badly (the road system and the tube) are the legacy of political control, while the bits which work pretty well (the taxi service, the airports and air service, and Eurostar) are the result of commercial acumen. What is needed is not top-down politics, but bottom-up commercial acumen.

Still unconvinced? Sorry, I tried. We are, barring a miracle, going to get a mayor, old-fashioned nostrum that it is. We might even vote in a decent one first time round. Then, sooner or later, we will screw up and vote in a dud, someone who doesn't understand the way in which London is a mix of marketplaces, each part of the global economy. And the dud will stumble about, mouthing political slogans, while, undermining all of the astounding progress made by the city in the past 15 years.

Art cannot serve spiritual ends when it has been created in sin

The controversy over Eric Gill's sculptures in Westminster Cathedral was initiated by Margaret Kennedy. Here she explains why she felt it necessary to speak out

JUST before Easter I was watching a religious programme *Love in the Park* on the BBC before going off to Church. I was shocked to find Cardinal Hume under a "station of the cross" at Westminster Cathedral. The stations of Christ's passion placed evenly around the cathedral. It is therefore impossible to move away from them or not have them in eyesight.

The cardinal was extolling the virtues of these works carved by a known paedophile, Eric Gill. I sat and thought, "Surely the cardinal knows this, and if he does, how could he promote Gill's work?" Did he not care that Catholic Survivors of Sexual Abuse would be, and were, very offended by his omitting to mention this fact, and his failing also to speak of Gill's daughters whom he raped and sodomised? The cardinal thus consigned all survivors today to obscurity and invisibility.

I wrote to the *Catholic Herald*, my letter was published and taken up by the national press. I am not surprised by the enormous amount of media attention my letter caused. I challenged the cardinal, the Catholic Church, Gill the man and paedophile, Gill the great artist, Gill the so-called holy man.

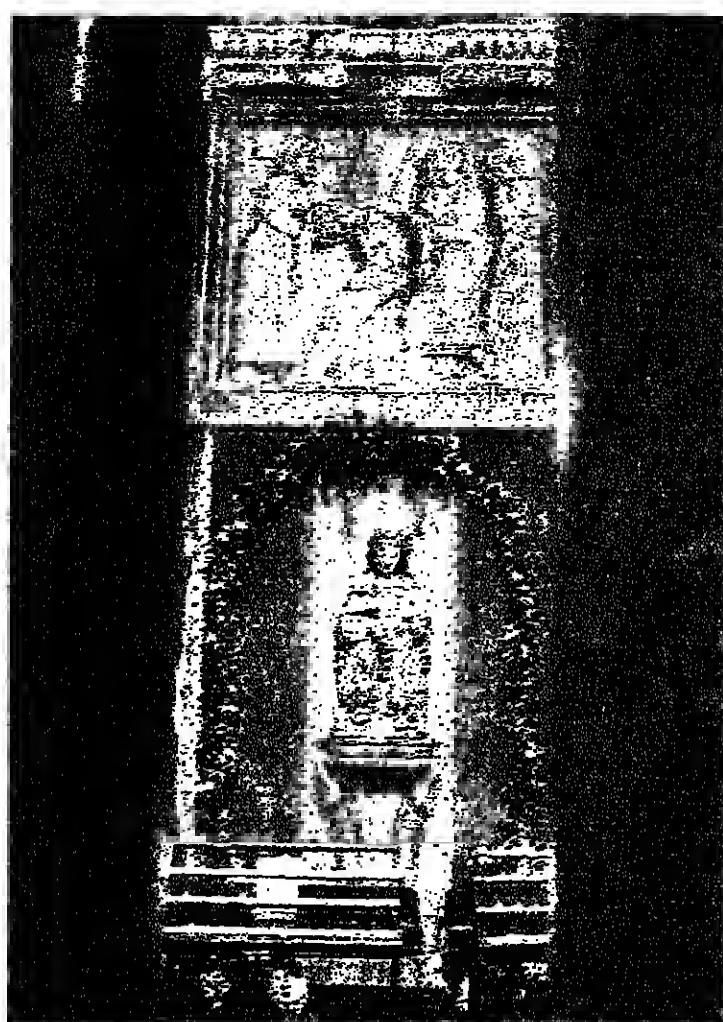
But my concern is not essentially about Gill's art, which I agree is of substantial merit (when he does not digress into pornography). My concern is with the juxtaposition of Gill's art (and therefore the man), Westminster Cathedral and prayer. And also with the invisibility of Gill's victims and all Catholic (or Christian) victims by patriarchal churches. It is a pastoral/spiritual concern not an aesthetic one.

The Catholic Church hides the full truth, something it is skilled at doing, particularly when it comes to clergy paedophilia. The victims must languish, carrying their pain with no understanding from their churches.

No published discussion on Eric Gill has chosen to focus on the pain of the victims of child sexual abuse or why we were angry at the cardinal's programme on Gill. Survivors were completely left out in the media coverage, while a great deal was said about Gill's redemption through the good merits of his artistic skills.

The reason for this was well explained by Marjorie Orr in *The Independent* on Sunday: "Artists and child abusers share a talent for deconstructing reality and reconstructing an often beautiful pseudo-reality in its place." I would add that cardinals, priests, and ministers of all denominations have this skill to the highest degree.

Gill "re-constructed" his reality so as to continue his sexual depravity: the "dissonance" he felt about what he was doing had to be alleviated. The Catholic Church with its "genital and patriarchal theology" was a gift to a paedophile and



The deposition, by Eric Gill, at Westminster Cathedral John Lawrence

a man who believed that his needs were paramount and women and children were objects for sexual experimentation. Flavours of this still abound today, giving other paedophiles reinforcement for their activities.

Theology speaks of Christ being the

validated by the hierarchy. His children would have had no means of getting anyone to believe what Gill was doing. It was distressing to read of Gill's grandson saying the family saw Gill's activities as "something of a family joke" (*Daily Mail*, 16 April). How can sodomy

We do not need to be reminded by every cathedral pillar that the Church favours paedophile art and maybe even the paedophile

bridgegroom and of his consummated love for the Church, the Bride. Some theologians hold that it is the male priest who plants the seed (semen) of faith in the female Church. This could be the reason why the Catholic Church does not have female priests, we have no penis, we cannot penetrate and plant God's seed.

Gill, as do many present day priest abusers, used this teaching to his advantage. It justified his "love" for women and children. The intercourse became divine, an echo of God's love in sending (seeding) Jesus to his people. We now know that so-called "spiritual" and "holy" paedophiles very often use these spiritual reasons to coerce victims. "God doesn't mind me doing this, sex is holy. I am a holy man, I wouldn't hurt you. God is my friend."

Gill probably used this reasoning with his children and other victims, backed up by inviting clerics to Ditchling so that women and children could see he was

of children, bestiality and the exploitation of young maidservants be seen as a joke?

It strikes me as very suspicious that Gill was so popular with celibate priests who visited him. His brand of genital, penile theology must have been a voyeur's dream. No wonder the patriarchal Church defends him. It might also explain why some artists and clergy can feel no discomfort at Gill's stations while survivors do. We do not have a sexual/genital/penile focused theology or world view!

The stations of the cross are intended to help us to call to mind Christ's crucifixion and passion, they are an aid to prayer and meditation. As one letter eloquently put it, as we glance up at them, all we see, superimposed on Gill carvings, are visions of Eric Gill pinning a frightened daughter to her bed so

that he could enjoy his sexual conquest. Even the young maids were at risk. They tried to resist. Gill wrote in his diary: "[they were] modest in refusing to undress". He liked them as, "nice girls, about 15, dressed as nuns in blue serge and two plaits of hair."

We are not talking of an art gallery, we are talking of a holy cathedral. We as Christian survivors deserve to have a place, to pray, to feel at peace, when peace evades us, not to be reminded by every cathedral pillar that the Church favours paedophile art and indeed maybe even the paedophile.

It has been said that we are "projecting our own anxieties on to a work of art". This is not what we are doing. Many, including the Cathedral clerics, have said that we can and should separate Gill's private sexual life from Gill the artist. But you cannot separate Gill the artist from Gill the paedophile, especially as you gaze on a piece of work and try to pray! The passion of Christ is meaningful to us, as we can relate our own passion to his as we pray. This can be enormously supportive to us in times of deep pain. As Clifford Longley put it in the *Tablet*, "The question is not whether these carvings are beautiful, but whether they are fit for their purpose."

Those who do separate Gill the paedophile from his art indicate, by the level of separation, their level of denial about what he did and what the children suffered, and what we too have suffered.

We are accused of wanting to desecrate the cathedral by requesting the removal of the stations. It would not desecrate, for the cathedral is already desecrated by their very presence, it would cleanse. It would be an opportunity for Church leaders to demonstrate an intolerance of child sexual assaults, rape and buggery. It would be a fitting recognition of Gill's victims and all victims/survivors of child sexual abuse.

Must we leave all protest to Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse, or to Les Whittingham, of the Midland Hotel in Morecambe, who is refusing to display a Gill fresco as demanded by his council. He says, "We've told them we don't want it back up, because Gill was a paedophile." If an hotelier can take a moral stance, why can't the cardinal? Are the "holy" people and artists right and the victims and ordinary people wrong?

We are convinced that the work of a man who exploited women and children for his own sexual perversions should not be in a cathedral house of God or extolled. Incest is inscribed in every tablet, on every pillar.

We want them down.

Forget dumbing down - books and bookshops are moving up



ANDREW
MARR

SPRINGTIME
READING

IT'S SPRING, of a sort. Minds turn to dew-fresh parks and un-splashed squares, of rolling grasslands open-air sport and nooching by riverbanks. All of which is fine, but second-best, for me, there is no better place in the world than a good bookshop, with the smell of fresh coffee in the air, staff who know their stuff, and time for a long, fiernorm-wasting browse. Keep those shutters down, lunk out Nature and enjoy... If this seems odd, then all I can say is that I am early in good company. However you cut the figures, books are big business and still growing. Sales are up. There has been a modest 1.5 per cent fall in the number of titles published in 1997 but that comes at the back of a huge rise in the

course of the decade, from just under 64,000 titles published in 1990 to more than 100,000 now. And though independent bookshops are under pressure, the march of the big specialist stores, above all Waterstone's, which recently effectively took over Dillons, looks unstoppable.

It is a big cultural change in my adulthood - and a very cheering one, too. When people talk about how economic growth has improved the quality of life for the majority - better food, better clothes, better housing - they should remember better books and better bookshops, too.

Can this trading up, this enthusiasm not merely for bookshops but for better books, be proven? In the BookTrack bestsellers list earlier this month the top five original fiction titles, in order, were John Grisham's *The Street Lawyer*, Nick Hornby's *About a Boy*, Joanna Trollope's *Other People's Children*, Barbara Vine's *The Chinney Sweeper's Boy*, and Toni Morrison's *Paradise*. In the mass-market fiction list were Kate Atkinson's *Human Croquet*, Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary*, PD James's *A Certain Justice* and Louis de Bernieres's *Captain Correlli's Mandolin*.

Among the top-five hardback non-fiction titles were a BBC cooking book and the in-

evitable *Wisden*, but also Peter Ackroyd's *Life of Thomas More* and Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*. And in the paperback non-fiction list are *The Little Book of Calm*, John Gray's *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, Jean-Dominique Bauby's *Diving Bell and Butterfly*, Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* and the Department of Transport's Highway Code.

It is pretty typical of such lists in recent years and it tells us a lot about ourselves. I haven't read all the books on the list, but I have read most.

Book-buying isn't, as I used to think, hopelessly old-fashioned or uncommon

There have been several newspaper columns devoted to the phenomenon of *The Little Book of Calm*, dwelling on what its popularity says about our frenetic lifestyles, our alleged selfishness, and what have you. To my mind, however, the most important thing is that it costs £1.99 and rests, mostly, just by the till. In real literary worth it can be safely bracketed with the clean prose, muscular construction and sense of narrative achieved by the DoT's Highway Code. All of us, similarly, are aware of the huge popularity of

emotional and social self-help books of the Mars and Venus variety.

Overall, the remarkable thing about these lists is their quality. Of the ten top hardback and mass-market works of fiction, five are unquestionably serious, proper and highly intelligent books - the new Hornby, the Toni Morrison, the Kate Atkinson, Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* and the delightful *Captain Correlli*. Of the rest, three, the John Grisham, the Barbara Vine and the PD James come from

the higher and more literate slopes of Mount Whodunnit; the Joanna Trollope is shrewd, tough and contemporary in the best sense; and Bridget Jones, who began life at *The Independent*, is a brilliantly funny and acute take on thirtysomething single femalehood. One of them will be read in a century's time - *Captain Correlli* - and maybe more. Not one of these books is actually bad.

Turning to that non-fiction list, it is not, in fact, extraordinary that a life of Thomas More, heavyweight in every

sense, makes it into any kind of top five, even a relatively slow-selling one? And how does it correlate to our fashionable view of ourselves as a post-literate, dumbed-down society that Ted Hughes is up there, too - and available in scores of places such as airport bookstalls, as well as Oxbridge or campus outlets? *Angela's Ashes* is also a wonderful work of summoned memory and literary nostalgia. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* was better as a story of human courage than as an actual book - but again, it was unquestionably a truly serious book.

Our literary editor, Boyd Tonkin, has recently compared bestseller lists in the late Nineties with those of the early Eighties and confirms my impression, which is that the average standard of novels being sold is much higher. The same is true, up to a point, of non-fiction: see the huge growth in popular science, meaning highly sophisticated, literate essays by truly serious people, like Stephen Pinker, Oliver Sacks, Matt Ridley and Richard Dawkins.

There are counter-indicators, such as the depressing spread of books about warfare, encroaching and eating up the history shelves; and the New Age idiot spiritualism, which seems to take up the same basement corners reserved for Marxism and feminism in ear-

lier decades... but, pacing past the stacked literary biographies, science books and so on, one sees the image of a country that is higher-brow than it seems to think it is. We are a highish-brow and fanatically literate culture.

I know that this goes against most media thinking, and that it contradicts the determined pessimism of a nation that knows in its guts that it's becoming dumber and glibber by the minute. But the evidence is overwhelming - go to your local bookshop and look. If it is a mirror, then it is a flattering mirror, a bright mirror. More than any rock music, or Britpack art, or films, it is evidence that Britain is a more interesting place to be than it was.

I'm sorry about the diet of relentless optimism - normal grouchy service will be resumed shortly. Blame it on spring. But book-buying isn't, as I used to think, hopelessly old-fashioned or uncommon. Thanks to Waterstone's and other enlightened people, you can find cafes and late opening, and the decent, fresh air-shunning heart of middle Britain celebrating and browsing all around you. Bees? Leather on willow? Forget it. Browsing is the best sound I know.

This article is an abbreviated version of a speech given last night in Harrogate to the Booksellers Association.

ONLY 20 DAYS TO GO

The first GCSE exams are only 20 days away

Is your child ready?

Which of the below is responsible for producing salts that emulsify or break down lipids?

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b) Gall bladder
c) The ileum

Answer in tomorrow's paper (yesterday's answer was a: 13.3km/s)

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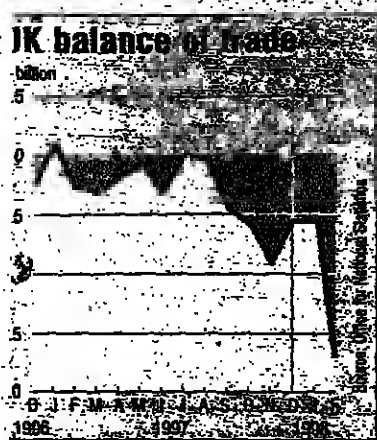
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Sterling blamed for worst trade gap in 7 years

By Michael Harrison
and Les Patterson

THE TOLL on the economy from the strong pound was graphically demonstrated yesterday after publication of the worst monthly trade figures in seven years and a warning from the Confederation of British Industry that export confidence was at its lowest since 1980.

The UK's global deficit on trade in goods and services in February was £1.7bn, more than three times January's deficit and way above analysts' expectations. The gloomy mood was reinforced by the CBI's latest quarterly industrial trends survey

showing export optimism at its lowest ebb for 18 years, a sharp drop in overall manufacturing confidence and growing signs of an investment strike by manufacturing industry.

Economists last night warned that UK manufacturing was on the brink of recession. CBI leaders dismissed this, saying industry was facing a "slowdown but not necessarily a stop".

However, they also used the latest survey results to reinforce calls for a halt to any further interest rate rises. The CBI also urged Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, to be more "activist" in helping keep the lid on sterling. Ministers said they accepted that the

high level of the pound was hurting but pointed to British industry's lack of competitiveness. Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, said Britain was still "far too far behind our major competitors", echoing comments last week by Mr Brown that UK industrial productivity was 40 per cent behind that of the US.

In a speech to businessmen in York last night, Adam Turner, the CBI's director general, accepted that the long-term goal was to improve productivity growth. But he added that short-term interest rates were high enough: "The strong pound is hurting our exporters badly and is beginning to hit their investment plans. The CBI's judgement is that the inflation target can

be met without any further rate rises."

Earlier, Sir Ross Buckland, chairman of Unigate and head of the CBI's economic affairs committee, went further, urging the Bank of England to confirm that rates are now at their peak and that the next movement would be downwards.

Simon Briscoe, economist at Nikko Europe, said the CBI survey was "incredibly weak" while Richard Iley of ABN Amro said UK's manufacturing sector "may already be in recession".

Export optimism is now lower than at any point during the last recession, with a negative balance of 48 per cent of companies pessimistic about prospects for the year ahead. Sterling averaged DM3.07

and \$1.68 during the survey period.

The trade deficit was the largest since the Office for National Statistics (ONS) began recording monthly trade in services back in January 1991.

Excluding oil and erratic items, the UK goods deficit widened by £566m in February to just over £2bn. The oil surplus fell by £220m to £166m, its lowest level since 1993, following the recent decline in oil prices. The surplus on UK services fell by just over £100m to £461m.

The UK's trade performance deteriorated most rapidly with non-EU countries, a fact that economists called "curious" given that sterling's appreciation "has mostly been a European affair".

Dusted research chief damns his former company's 'wonder products'

Millar condemns Biotech's drugs

Terry Macalister

BRITISH Biotech's former head of clinical research last night launched a damning criticism of the company's two main products. Dr Andrew Millar said one was might have to be shelved while the other only had a 40 per cent chance of success.

Dr Millar, sacked last week, alleged the board was running a "business plan" consisting only of "extreme and unfounded optimism", which would run out of money and "grind to a halt in about two years".

He said the chance of "arimastat", the company's "wonder drug", being successful was only 40 per cent. He said it would take a few more years to know if it worked in cancer.

And he poured cold water on expectations that Zucutax, another "wonder product", would be successful. "This very expensive product should be shut down," he said.

But British Biotech's chairman, John Raisman, dismissed Dr Millar's criticism of the company saying it was "nonsense" (that the company could "run out of money"). He said: "Preservation of cash over the long term is a key criterion of our company."

He said the suggestions that the company could only have a 40 per cent chance of "arimastat" succeeding, Mr Raisman said: "I'm amazed. Dr Millar has always been a great proponent of 'arimastat'."

Dr Millar's negative views on



Built on hopes: The Biotech facility in Cowley, Oxford, constructed in the hope of the drugs going ahead

Zacutax were dismissed by Mr Raisman. "You have got to doubt him on almost every point," he said.

Dr Millar made some of his views known in an open letter. He was dismissed last week for allegedly breaching confidentiality clauses in his contract by talking to shareholders.

Dr Millar has been at odds with senior management for 18 months over what he perceived to be its over-optimistic view of the company's commercial future. He said yesterday he had warned main board members, including the non-executives, at a meeting last May that the prospects for Zucutax were not as rosy as many people thought.

He alleged he was reprimanded afterwards by a senior director for being overly negative and that on another occasion he was reprimanded by another executive for "attempting to demoralise senior management".

Mr Raisman agreed that Dr Millar had given a "downton

message, but added: "Anything he said at that stage could only be speculative because the trial was at too early a stage to be statistically significant."

The British Biotech chairman said he was still optimistic about its products. The company is hoping they will be successful. He dismissed Dr Millar's views as "idiosyncratic".

Dr Millar admitted last night he felt he had probably breached confidentiality agreements by talking to shareholders but said he had no option.

He said he had been through line management up to and including John Raisman, the chairman, calling on them to reduce company expenditure because the underlying drug trials did not justify such expansion.

Dr Millar said: "It seemed to me to be a responsible thing to do to talk to the main shareholder [Perpetual] and the company's financial director [Kleinwort Benson] and try to get them to put pressure on management to change corporate direction."

He claimed he had been told by the shareholders they could get management to safeguard the future of the company "but in the end I finished up being hung out to dry in public".

Dr Millar made his particular views on the main British Biotech drugs public for the first time yesterday. He said: "Marimastat is a very interesting potential drug which must be researched but it could take a few more years or more before we know whether it works in cancer or not. This is totally at odds with the business plans."

With regard to Zucutax, he said: "I fear the early data on leipafant [Zucutax] misled us. The current data needs to be carefully reviewed and, if incompatible with success, this very expensive project should be shut down."

Shareholders watching the company's share price plummet from £3 to yesterday's level of 53p have been anxious to hear the views of the non-executive directors on the British Biotech board. They are led by Mr Raisman, the former chairman of Shell, and include David John, chairman of the BOC industrial group.

Mr Raisman defended the role of the non-executives, saying they had acted with "extensive due diligence" and had been involved in extensive discussions about corporate strategy all along.

Dr Millar accepted he was also concerned about the value of his own share options which were exercisable in 1999.



Speaking up: Dr Andrew Millar, at home yesterday, said what he was doing was 'pretty frightening'

Portrait of a whistleblower

By Terry Macalister

WHISTLEBLOWERS come in all shapes and sizes but no one would pick out Dr Andrew Millar, a highly successful head of clinical research, as an obvious candidate.

Sacked last week by British Biotech, for which he had dedicated his last seven years, 43-year old Dr Millar risks losing his income and share options as well as sacrificing a gold-plated clinical reputation.

No future employers like whistleblowers, yet Dr Millar has pitched himself into hand-

to-hand combat with group which can call on some serious heavyweights from the business world.

British Biotech's board includes John Raisman, the former Shell chairman, and David John, BOC chairman. For his part Dr Millar has only a nervous solicitor and a belief that "honesty is an impenetrable armour".

Given the odds, Dr Millar admits it's all "pretty frightening", adding: "It really is not what I am about. I think it's something that only comes up once in a lifetime and I hope I will have to do it again."

Until differences with management appeared, Dr Millar had enjoyed considerable success. He had established the clinical research team having been brought in from pharmaceutical group, HMR.

He had worked in Japan and Australia before being European director for HMR. Before this he had worked as a surgeon registrar at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

Dr Millar studied at Oxford, having done his pre-clinical training at Cambridge. He was schooled at Winchester College and comes from a family of Oxfordshire doctors.

His father was a local GP and his wife is also a doctor. He lives in the village of Wallingford where his main pre-occupations - outside work - are his three children, tennis and gardening.

So why did put at risk such an enviable lifestyle? "I just found the directors were becoming big-headed and I feared a promising company could fall through their pride."

But he is realistic about the challenge facing him. He says: "It is inconceivable that I will get back there [into British Biotech] unless all the board has gone."

Records chief out in EMI power struggle

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

THE power struggle at EMI took another turn yesterday when the music group confirmed that Jean-François Ceillon, chief executive of its UK record labels, had left, with immediate effect.

Mr Ceillon, known in the industry as a flamboyant high-spender, was brought into the company by Jim Field who paid him a £12m pay-off.

EMI said Mr Ceillon was leaving because his contract had not been renewed. However, it

is understood that the decision was taken by Ken Berry, the head of EMI's music labels worldwide, and who was promoted to the main EMI board earlier this month.

Mr Ceillon's departure is seen as an attempt by EMI to move away from its profligate image associated with Mr Field, known as "Lucky Jim" because of his high pay.

Mr Ceillon once hired a helicopter to take him between two football matches. EMI said he did not charge the fee on his expenses. Though Mr Ceillon achieved success with groups like Eternal, his more recent record was considered patchy.

City cuts Selfridges' valuation

By Nigel Cope
Assistant City Editor

THE value of Selfridges, the Oxford Street department store which will be de-merged from Sears in the summer, was dramatically reduced yesterday after it reported a sharp fall in full year profits and weak sales affected by lower tourist spending, the disruption of refurbishment and a slow Christmas.

City analysts cut their valuation to as little as £275m against previous price tags of more than £500m, despite a property re-valuation which has added more than £100m to its balance sheet and the prospect of a new Selfridges in

Manchester. Sir Bob Reid, the Sears chairman, said he had received offers for the Selfridges business but turned them down. "We intend to float it," he said. He said none of the offers were from Harrods owner Mohammed Al Fayed.

One analyst said: "People were valuing Selfridges at £500m, but we think £275m would be more realistic. This is a very uncertain sector and this is another exercise of management mis-judgement. They are a day late and a dollar short."

The analyst said the decision to press ahead with the de-merger was surprising given Selfridges lower sales, falling profits and new systems that do

not go live until January. Nick Bubb of SG Securities said: "Management sounded relaxed but given the company's record the chances of something going wrong are quite high."

Sears plans to de-merge Selfridges by July and its Freeman's mail order group later this year. Analysts had been hoping for a capital return of around £200m to shareholders. However, some said the figure could now be as low as £80m.

Sir Bob Reid, Sears chairman, admitted that 1997 had been a "challenging year", in which it had re-structured the business and sold its troublesome British Shoe subsidiary. "We have got rid of the losers,"

he said. He was speaking as Sears announced losses of £115m caused by exceptional charges of £174m. Almost £150m of these were related to the sale of British Shoe.

Profits in the three remaining businesses all fell. Freeman's was hit by the strong pound. The clothing business, which will be Sears' sole business after the two de-mergers, saw profits fall after losses at Miss Selfridges caused by higher markdowns. Richards is only breaking even, while Wallis and Warehouse performed well. Profits dipped slightly at Adams childrenswear.

Investment Column, page 20

Election battle at Baltic Exchange

By Terry Macalister

A MUTINY has broken out at the Baltic Exchange, one of the City's oldest institutions, with dissident shareholders campaigning for election to the ruling board on a "reform" ticket.

The current Baltic board is accused of wasting hundreds of thousands of pounds commissioning reports and "failing to move with the times". These criticisms have been put by Peter Kerr-Dineen, joint chairman of respected shipbroking firm Howe Robinson, in an open letter to Baltic shareholders.

Mr Kerr-Dineen, one of two

critics seeking election, has put himself forward for a secret ballot of all members on 8 July. In his letter, he criticises the way the board dealt with a Deloitte & Touche report it had commissioned on how to extricate itself from financial problems.

The letter says: "Regardless of a cost of £300,000, the board had no hesitation rejecting the report and instead floated a poorly constructed alternative set of proposals that it subsequently withdrew."

Jim Buckley, Baltic secretary, said the report was shelved after a majority of members made it clear they did not agree with its findings.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change %	10 wk high	10 wk low	Yield %
FTSE 100	5806.60	84.20	1.47	6180.50	4361.20	3.47
FTSE 250	3656.50	3.80	1.07	3805.80	2384.20	2.95
FTSE 100	2807.40	33.80	1.20	2938.70	2139.30	3.97
FTSE 100	2740.51	30.62	1.15	2861.12	2106.58	3.24
FTSE 100	2828.50	1.90	0.07	2842.80	2102.10	2.98
FTSE 100	1411.10	-0.80	-0.06	1415.30	1292.00	3.23
FTSE 100	1078.40	-3.20	-0.30	1082.70	965.90	3.06
FTSE 100	8937.07	20.43	0.23	9213.33	6701.14	1.58
FTSE 100	15386.43	264.52	1.73	20810.79	14488.21	0.98
FTSE 100	16078.57	24.90	0.80	16820.31	7999.13	3.78
FTSE 100	3018.67	38.46	1.27	3442.00	3361.71	1.62

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88
1.74	5.88	5.88

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25
1.6570	2.9370	161.25

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5071	Malta (lira)	0.6310
Austria (schilling)	20.39	Mexican (nuevo peso)	12.88
Belgium (francs)	60.00	Netherlands (guilders)	3.2623
Canada (\$)	2.3450	New Zealand (\$)	2.9171
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8471	Norway (krone)	12.17
Denmark (krone)	11.15	Portugal (escudos)	205.51
Finland (markka)	8.8769	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.0949
France (francs)	9.7397	Singapore (\$)	2.5370
Germany (marks)	2.9140	Spain (pesetas)	246.19
Greece (drachma)	511.17	South Africa (rand)	8.1106
Hong Kong (\$)	12.57	Sweden (krone)	12.81
Ireland (pounds)	1.1478	Switzerland (francs)	2.4264
Israel (sheqels)	81.05	Thailand (bahts)	58.42
Italy (lira)	2081	Turkey (liras)	337.857
Japan (yen)	216.18	USA (\$)	1.6341
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9916		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Troubles not over at Sears

THAT Sears' shares should rise yesterday after a truly awful set of results shows how desperate the market has become about this company. The rise was down to the fact that the current trading figures were not even worse but prospects at the current share price, up 4.25p to 59.75p, do not look exciting.

Yesterday's £115m loss amounts to the group's second "kitchen sinking" of its accounts in three years. This year's deficit was attributable to £174m of exceptional, chiefly the £150m cost of selling its loss-making British Shoe Corporation.

If selling BSC had removed the last problems from Sears portfolio the relief would seem justified. Sadly this is not the case. The group is pressing on with demerger both its Selfridges department store operation and its Freemans mail order business even though market conditions and the performance of both businesses are not auspicious.

Selfridges saw profits fall by 36 per cent to £22.7m, partly due to less space in the Oxford Street store as refurbishment continues but also due to lower tourist spending and higher mark-downs.

At Freemans, profits were also down with the strong pound hitting overseas sales. In clothing, the division Sears will be left with after the demerger, results were affected by losses at Miss Selfridge and a poor performance from Richards.

Analysts are attaching break-up values of 65p-75p to Sears with SG Securities going for £350m (23p) for Selfridges, £250m (16p) for Freemans, £200m (13p) for clothing and a £200m capital return in the form of a 13p special dividend.

Net assets are £6.6p following a £122m upgrade in the valuation of the property portfolio. This underpins the share price but Sears has several problems looking forward. The retail climate is difficult. Freemans will face tougher competition from the GUS-Argos link-up, and the clothing business has historically proved unable to hang on to its margins when the going gets difficult.

Management appeared confident that the worst was over yesterday but investors should be wary given this company's capacity to disappoint. Worth holding until the demerger and for possible takeover action but not one to chase much above current levels.

Football value at Leeds

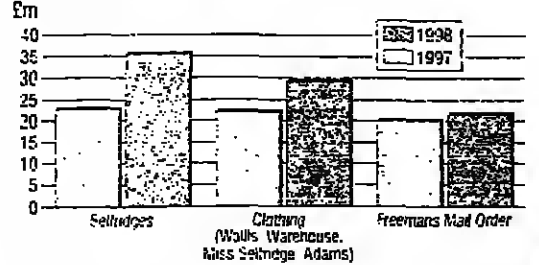
DISILLUSIONED fans could be forgiven for turning their back on football shares, which have shown relegation form all

Sears: At a glance

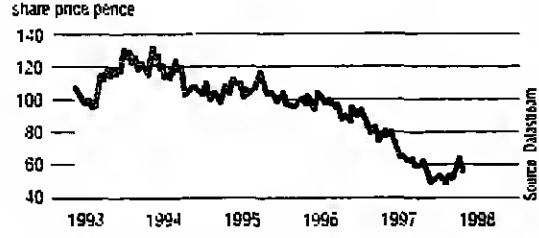
Market value: £911m, share price 59.75 (+4.25p)

Five-year record	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Turnover (£m)	2.01	2.14	2.33	1.85	1.82
Pre-tax profits (£m)	138.30	153.80	(119.70)	68.10	(115.70)
Earnings per share (p)	6.80	7.50	(7.10)	3.30	(7.30)
Dividends per share (p)	3.68	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95

Trading profits by division



Sears share price



this season. But the slump in the value of the sector means there could be value to be had for investors bold enough to remain in their seats for the long haul.

Leeds Sporting, formerly known as Cuspid and owner of Leeds United football club, whose own shares have slumped from more than 46p to 19p, could eventually turn out to be one of the winners.

While it is not in the financial league of the footballing elite such as Manchester United, it is doing better than most. Football revenues rose 10 per cent to £13.5m in the six months to December, thanks to better attendances and rising income from executive boxes and catering.

Of course much of this and future financial success, as always with football clubs, depends on the team's performance on the pitch. Here the omens are good. Manager George Graham has started a revival at the club. Fifth in the league at the moment, Leeds should qualify for Europe next year.

Players' wages, as in the rest of the Premier League, are a major concern but the underlying rise of 18 per cent is better than average and Graham has cleared out a lot of dead wood from the squad. A new £40m development of an indoor arena and hotel next to Leeds United's ground also promises to create value for shareholders, although at this stage how much is anybody's guess.

Peel Hunt forecasts pre-transfer profits of around £2.5m in the 12 months to June, rising to £4m the year after.

However perhaps a better way to view Leeds is as a relatively under-exploited foot-

ball franchise with genuine potential and a strong fan base.

Fibernet hopes high

INVESTORS have dialled into Fibernet, which specialises in providing local fibre-optic telephone cables, over the last few months.

Listed on the Alternative Investment Market at 100p in June 1994, the shares were languishing at 84p last Christmas, but have soared to a peak of 341p last week, valuing the company at £133m, in anticipation of a profit bonanza.

When or indeed if it arrives, however, is a difficult one to call.

Fibernet reported a loss of £2m compared to a profit of £132,000 last year. That included an increased loss of £2.3m on T.A.Net, its high-speed fibre-optic communications network used to link local telephone systems and on which the company's hopes are pinned.

Turnover in the established local area network services rose by almost 30 per cent to £4.4m, but operating profits rose by just 9 per cent to £582,000, reflecting margin pressures caused by the need to constantly upgrade technology.

These margin worries and delays in translating orders for T.A.Net into income combined to send the shares down 40p to 301p yesterday. Analysts are now looking for a flat second half and a loss of £2m for the full year.

Analysts have pencilled in a profit of £6m for next year. At 30 times forecast earnings the shares are far from cheap given the risks involved and the threat of competition from the likes of BT in future years. However Fibernet still looks a good long-term investment.

Shareholders attack SB board

By Andrew Verity

THE BOARD of SmithKline Beecham yesterday faced the first public attacks from shareholders for its role in wiping £13bn off the value of the company after merger talks with Glaxo Wellcome were broken off.

Shareholders attacked the board for exonerating themselves from blame for the merger flop, bitterly criticising executives for allowing the company to be exposed to a "drubbing" from the City and the press. One shareholder said: "The chief executive says that he is disappointed. Well he damn well ought to be disappointed. You're blaming them and no doubt they will blame you. But despite all you have said, something like £13bn was reported lost when this merger failed. I think that is a disgrace."

Sir Peter Walters, chairman of SB, said: "You have lost money but you have lost money on a merger that could not have delivered the benefits of that first few days' share price enhancement."

Mr Walters hit back at claims last week by Sir Richard Sykes, chief executive of Glaxo Well-



Jan Leschly, on £60m. "Could he take less," a shareholder asked

come, that Glaxo had wanted a merger of equals. He said Sir Richard Sykes on 30 January had said he wanted both himself and Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline Beecham, to report to the board.

"Sir Richard Sykes, however, on 20 February, then proposed removing Jan before the deal had even been completed and having other members of the management team report directly to him."

Mr Leschly also faced sharp criticism over a pay and compensation package which amounts to more than £60m. One shareholder asked: "I'm sure

Jan is so wonderful but could he please take a little less money?"

Mr Walters said the package was needed to retain Mr Leschly in the context of the worldwide pay for heading a pharmaceutical company. His pay ranked eighth in the world for pharmaceutical companies while Sir Richard was the 12th best paid.

"These are salaries that are outside the normal range for British companies. We pay well and it is a lot. But so far the company has delivered a lot."

Mr Leschly ruled out a merger with Zeneca and said SB had a bright future as an independent company.

Scottish & Newcastle to close down three sites

By Andrew Yates

ANOTHER part of Britain's historic brewing industry disappeared yesterday when Scottish & Newcastle (S&N) announced the closure of headquarters in Northampton, the West Midlands and Chorley with the loss of 300 jobs.

It is the latest in a series of cutbacks from major brewers who have sacked thousands of workers over the past few years in an effort to cope with a shift in power in the drinks industry following the emergence of huge independent pub chains. The new pub giants have used their

market power to squeeze bigger discounts out of brewers, forcing them to cut costs.

S&N has been forced to restructure its business following the recent loss of an exclusive contract to supply The Grand Pub Company. Analysts expect the loss of beer revenues from what is its biggest customer will cost S&N £25m a year and mean its brewing profits will be flat this year.

The headquarters of William Younger, the trading company named after the founding father of the group who first opened a brewery in Edinburgh almost 150 years ago, is being shut down.

The base of Matthew Brown, the brewer that S&N acquired after a bitter takeover battle in 1987, is also going to be abandoned.

S&N is planning to shake up its whole brewing network by streamlining six of its sales businesses into four regional companies under its main brands including Courage, John Smith's, Newcastle Breweries and Scottish Brewers.

S&N is not planning to axe any of beer brands as part of the restructuring. But analysts believe that the group is likely to cut costs further over the next few years, which could involve rooting out smaller, less successful beers.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Alexandra Warehouse (F)	66.0m (65.9m)	5.6m (1.1m)	10.7p (2.2p)	7.0p (6.5p)
Car's Billing Ltd (F)	43.66m (42.97m)	0.853m (1.704m)	5.5p (14.5p)	3.0p (8.0p)
David Brown (F)	191.9m (181.8m)	15.0m (17.2m)	17.0p (17.7p)	9.2p (8.4p)
Fibernet Group (F)	4.70m (3.42m)	-1.96m (0.132m)	-6.3p (0.4p)	nil (nil)
McCarthy & Stone (F)	41.0m (82.1m)	9.1m (4.5m)	5.2p (3.2p)	1.0p (0.6p)
NY Holdings (F)	47.11m (44.96m)	6.508m (F 5.02m)	3.44p (3.3p)	0.65p (0.3p)
Sears (F)	1.62m (1.93m)	-115.7m (88.1m)	4.1p (4.3p)	3.5p (3.9p)
S & U (F)	60.46m (60.52m)	7.02m (7.13m)	42.33p (39.31p)	19.0p (16.0p)
United Assurance (F)	9.02m (10.18m)	0.150m (2.02m)	24.9p (88.4p)	8.25p (6.0p)
Utility Cable (F)	33.49m (85.14m)	-3.01m (1.78m)	-2.06p (0.80p)	nil (0.27p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim 1 EPS is pre-exceptionals * Dividend to be paid as a FID

Hi-Tech surges on bid hopes

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

SHARES in Hi-Tech Sports, the sports shoe manufacturer, surged by more than a third to 51.5p yesterday after it said it was considering a deal with a larger partner that could lead to a bid for the company. The increase values Hi-Tec at £26m.

"Interested parties are most likely to be American corporations and the possible associations being considered by the board may or may not result in an offer being made for

Hi-Tec," the company said.

Hi-Tec's chief executive Paul Harrison admitted that, due to the group's size, it was most likely that a link-up would take the form of a takeover. "There is quite a lot of consolidation in our industry and the big firms are getting bigger," he explained. "It's a matter of scale, we are a very small company and now is a good moment [to look for a deal] after two or three years of improvement."

Any bid for Hi-Tec would have to be an agreed deal as founder and chairman Frank van Wezel controls 52 per cent

of the shares. Likely bidders could include a US giant such as Nike or Timberland. The market for training shoes has been under pressure from the rapid growth in "brown shoes" such as Timberland, Rockport and Caterpillar.

The group has been going through a period of recovery after it ran into problems after diversifying into low margin clothing as competitors' cut prices.

For the year to end April 1994, house broker Greig Middleton is forecasting profits of 4m on sales of £93m.

IT HAD to happen, I suppose. I refer to the "rebranding" of Caledonia Investments, the annoyingly successful vehicle run by the Cayer family.

The Cayzers, old Tories and old money, have finally decided to break with tradition and promote a quartet of non-family plebs to the board.

The new appointments will, however, only be "associate" directors. The lucky oils are Graeme Denison, who became Caledonia's finance director in 1992. Tony Carter, group taxation manager who joined nine years ago, Paul Whiteley, finance manager who joined in 1989 and John Mehrteus, administration manager who enlisted in 1991.

Not that the current, family-dominated board is amateurish. I hasten to add. Paul Buckley, Caledonia's chairman, and Sir David Kinloch, deputy chief executive, are both chartered accountants, for instance.

The Cayer family did spectacularly well by selling its family business British & Commonwealth to John Gann in the 1980s, just before the business fell apart. Caledonia promptly bought what was left and afterwards I hope such aristocratic brio will not be lost in the new, proletarian Caledonia.

I've heard of glass ceilings but this is stretching it a bit. The Society of Dyers & Colourists has just appointed its first ever woman president in its 114 years existence. Dr Veronica Bell, founder and owner of a textile printing and dyeing company in Harrogate, has got the top job for the first time since the society was founded in Bradford in 1884. Dr Bell's company Veebeetech is a dyeing and printing business which specialises in the top end of the market. She has chosen as her theme for the year: "The SDC... A force for the future." And not a moment too soon.

American giant buy UK internet bookseller

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PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK

VICKERS, the British engineering company which is in talks to sell Rolls Royce motors to the Germans, has poached a Belgian from BTR to be its new chief executive.

The only snag is, no-one at Vickers seems to know how Paul Buysse pronounces his name.

Mr Buysse, 53, is executive director responsible for a clutch of businesses at BTR including power drives, environmental technology and the rail division,

with a combined turnover of £1.9bn. A spokeswoman for Vickers says she thinks his name is pronounced "Boy-ess-sah", although the subject remains open to debate.

The spokeswoman adds that Mr Buysse will not be using the title conferred on him by the King of the Belgians, King Baudouin, that of "Chevalier Paul Buysse," that country's equivalent of a knighthood. "Chevalier Buysse" would be a bit of a mouthful, I suppose.

He succeeds Sir Colin Chandler, who continues as chairman of Vickers. Sir Colin himself succeeded Sir Richard Lloyd as chairman, and 12 months ago agreed to stand in as chief executive for a year whilst a new chief executive officer was found.

Vickers is keen to use Mr Buysse's experience and international contacts. He helped design and implement BTR's strategy of changing itself from a diversified conglomerate to a focused engineering group. Vickers is undergoing a similar process, with the car business about to be off-loaded, and the possibility of the Challenger tank business being merged with GKN's Warrior armoured car operation.

The Vickers spokeswoman had no comment to make on that score, but did say that talks with BMW over Rolls Royce are "fairly intense at the moment". BMW's exclusive right to sales talks is about to run out, leaving Volkswagen with a ray of hope.

TO CONTINUE the internationalist theme, the deputy chairman of Liffe who was born in Canada of Dutch parents and educated in Columbia, Denmark and England, is leaving UBS to take over as group chief executive of Credit Lyonnais Rouse (CLR), the French-owned derivatives house.

Phew. Clara Furse, 40, is global head of futures and options at UBS and has been a board member at Liffe since 1990. She is not hanging around to see how the "merger" with SBC will go, however. Her new employers have "a very international business - they're very strong in commodities and in Asia," she says. Her new job will also give her wider responsibilities, she adds.

But what of the increasing competition from Frankfurt and Paris for Liffe's business? Should the London market ditch the open outcry traders

Risk-taking yields big rewards for the rich

THE RICH are getting richer and are taking greater risks with their investments, according to a report out yesterday. The 1994 Merrill Lynch/Gemini World Wealth Report reckoned the wealth of the world's richest people grew by 5 per cent last year to \$17.4 trillion (£10.4 trillion). The report also found that lower risk investments, such as bank deposits and bonds, were falling out of favour with richer investors, who were turning to the traditionally more risky equity markets.

Weather cost as forecast

INSURANCE giants General Accident and Guardian Royal Exchange revealed the extent of the impact of the severe weather during January and Easter in the UK and the ice storms in Canada. GRE said its liabilities were around £37m while GA said claims had risen £30m year-on-year in the first three months of 1995. Analysts said weather losses in the first part of the year were in line with market expectations.

Allianz goes fast

A DM1.3bn (£435m) batch of new shares in insurer Allianz was snapped up by global institutional investors in 30 minutes. The issue, at DM546 a share, marked the second phase of a capital increase to help fund Allianz's planned takeover of France's AGE, which will restore it to the number one spot in Europe.

Engine order for Rolls

ROLLS-ROYCE said International Aero Engines is to supply V2500 engines to three Latin American airlines in the biggest single order in the consortium's history. Rolls-Royce is a major shareholder in IAE. The contract, worth up to \$2.3bn (£1.37bn), has a potential value to Rolls of \$770m, it said. Grupo Taca, Lan-Chile and TAM Brazil have selected the V2500 to power 88 firm and 87 option Airbus Industrie A319 and A320 aircraft. The engines will be assembled at Rolls-Royce's factory in Derby.

United Biscuits expands

UNITED BISCUITS is in talks with Campbell Soup Company to buy its Biscuits Delacre business for an undisclosed sum. Delacre is Campbell's continental European biscuit business, with operations in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. UB said it expected the acquisition to be earnings enhancing in its first year. In the year to July 1997, Delacre had sales of \$180m. UB said, adding that a proposed return of £150m to shareholders this July would be unaffected.

Telekom's Asia charge

DEUTSCHE TELEKOM said it had taken a DM300m (£100m) charge against its assets in Asia as a result of the region's financial and economic crisis. Joachim Kroeske, chief financial officer, told a news conference that, including business losses in the region, Telekom's results had been depressed by DM900m last year.

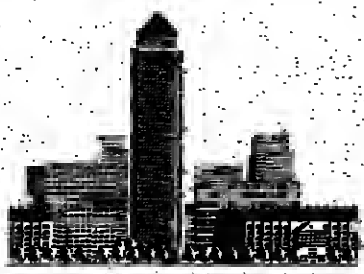
Salvage shares tumble

SHARES in Universal Salvage lost a fifth of their value after the independent contract motor salvage group warned full year profits would be below current market estimates. The shares closed down 12.5p at 50p. The group expects pre-tax profits of around £1.6m. It warned at the interim stage the group would not meet the estimates for the year to April in the market at that time - about £4m - and brokers downgraded it to about £2.5m.

Coopers to hire 1,000

COOPERS & LYBRAND, the Big Six accountancy firm that is in the process of merging with Price Waterhouse, is seeking to hire 1,000 people around the world as part of a massive recruitment drive aimed at keeping pace with a projected growth rate of 20 per cent a year.

The airlines chief and the incredible prize



OUTLOOK
ON SIR MICHAEL
BISHOP, WHY THE
POUND MIGHT
WOBBLE AND
INGENUITY THE
GOVERNMENT
DIDN'T THINK OF

EUROPE'S airlines have discovered that it is much more fun to float than to sit around on the tarmac. The rush of carriers coming to the market is in danger of turning into one of those stampedes that follows a free flight offer.

The latest carrier to make its next destination a Stock Exchange listing is the British Regional Airlines Group. Don't worry if you've never heard of it. The business was better known as Manx Airlines and Loganair until they became a British Airways franchise two years ago, and the pilot is Sir Michael Bishop, who counts his fortune in Heathrow landing slots rather than gold bars.

There has rarely been a better time for airlines to go public, and the roll-call gets longer by the day... Ryanair, Virgin Express, Debonair, AB Airlines. The big difference with British Regional Airlines is that it is not a cut-price carrier. In fact it goes out of its way to fly what are known in the trade as "thin routes" - ones with too few passengers to attract anything as unseemly as a fares war.

British Regional Airlines is only the second UK scheduled airline to come to market, the other being BA. Unlike BA, however, it will be on a blistering historic multiple of more than 30 if it reaches its reserve price of £30m-£100m. That might seem extraordinary for a business with net assets of just £1.3m (it leases virtually all its fleet) operating in a sector as notoriously cyclical as aviation. But that's the bull market for you.

Sir Michael will make about £25m from the float, much of which will be used to repay inter-company debts owed to his other

airline, the flagship carrier British Midland. Sir Michael owns 60 per cent of BM, the Scandinavians at SAS own the rest. He is not said to be in any hurry to go the same route and float his prize asset. But with no heir to pass British Midland on to, and no stated intention of joining SAS in the Star Alliance, the temptation must be there. Since it is four times as profitable as British Regional Airlines and owns 13 per cent of all slots at Heathrow, the windfall would be truly astronomical. Watch this space.

Flaws in Brown's Emu policy

THE Treasury Select Committee's report into preparations for monetary union highlights some key flaws in the Chancellor's Emu policy. Just to recap, Gordon Brown has declared himself in favour of the single currency in principle, but has ruled out joining in the first wave or the lifetime of this parliament. Furthermore, he has set five, rather woolly, preconditions.

For a start, the committee finds, the five tests are too ill defined, particularly on the key criteria of achieving a sufficient degree of convergence, to be adequately assessed. Nor is it clear how the Chancellor does plan to assess these tests. Without this knowledge there is bound to be uncertainty in the financial markets. Worse, the five tests seem to take no account of an admittedly negative but possibly rather more weighty consideration - the economic costs of not joining. This is similar to the argument that

whether or not Emu is a good thing, since it is happening anyway it may be against our interests to stay out.

However, these difficulties pale into insignificance set aside the main problem. As the committee points out, it will not be possible to judge "clearly and unambiguously" either the "success" of Emu (the Chancellor's own words) or whether it has met the five tests for at least five years after the single currency's launch. This takes us to 2004, or approximately halfway through the next parliament. The committee doesn't explicitly make this point, but obviously it's the case that if Emu is by this stage an undeniable success, the European Central Bank will extract penalty points for our late entry. Everyone wants a risk-free bet, but in the real world it doesn't work that way.

The committee raises other important imponderables. One is the possibility, discussed before in this column, that the single currency might become quite widely used in Britain before any decision is taken to enter. Already many businesses have indicated their intention of conducting much of their trade in euros, whether Britain joins or not. If they were to extend this policy down to their cost base, for instance paying their workforce in euros, then a large part of the economy would de facto become the province of the European Central Bank regardless of what the politicians want.

Finally there is the question of entering the single currency at an "appropriate" exchange rate. Given that the Government has surrendered control of monetary policy to an independent Bank of England, and that

an exchange rate target forms no part of its formal thinking on interest rates, this creates clear difficulties in achieving exchange rate stability, or an "appropriate rate". Indeed, it is quite likely that if the euro swiftly establishes reserve currency status, the pound, caught between the dollar and the euro, would become highly volatile.

Two observations can be drawn from all this. The first is that in truth the new government's policy doesn't add up to much of an advance on John Major's position: though it might look a little more positive, it is still largely a political fudge. The second is that a huge amount of work is left to be done on whether it is in Britain's economic interests to join, and on how to join in an orderly and advantageous manner.

A simple trick they didn't spot

THE National Audit Office has already lambasted the last Government and its advisers over the relatively poor price they achieved for the three former British Rail train leasing companies, so it may seem a bit unfair to continue jumping up and down on their graves. However, just how much of an undervalue these businesses were sold at is only just becoming apparent.

All three of these companies, along with a number of other assets (such as the Ministry of Defence's stock of housing) which rely heavily or solely on the Government for their income, were sold as conventional privatisations - that is as ordinary companies

making ordinary profits and paying ordinary dividends. What the Government's advisers (Hambros in the case of the three leasing companies) failed to realise was that because these businesses are backed by guaranteed government income, they could be "securitised", or refinanced through the issue of bonds with a credit rating not too far away from that of a conventional gilt edged stock. Thus the value of the companies became multiplied manifold in the hands of the City's financial alchemists, and those such as Nomura who realised the potential cleaned up.

Everyone has since piled aboard the bandwagon. Securitisation is now applied to such diverse interests as pop star royalties (following the Bowie bond, we are about to get a Rod Stewart bond), films, mortgage-backed securities and credit card receivables - anything with a reliable income stream. Stagecoach this week launched a £36m bond to finance an order for 113 new trains.

Outside the City it is fashionable to regard the apparent financial engineering of these transactions as at least questionable and possibly quite dangerous, for it looks like a return to 1980s-style debt financing. However, there is another way of looking at it. Since the risk of the assets should they fail, is transferred to the bonds too, securitisation merely becomes an ingenious off-balance sheet way of raising finance. Risk is transferred from the company and its business to the bondholders, who are unable to call on the companies' other assets in the event of a default. Simple, yet ingenious. Too bad the government didn't spot it.

American giant buys UK internet bookseller

By Nigel Cope
Assistant City Editor

AMAZON.COM, the world's largest internet bookseller, fired another shot in the UK book wars yesterday when it announced plans to accelerate its expansion into Europe with three acquisitions including Bookpages.co.uk, the British internet book retailer. The move is likely to increase the pressure on the UK book market, which is already being targeted by American high street retailers.

Amazon, based in Seattle, is paying \$35m (£33m) for the three businesses, which also include Telebook, Germany's largest internet book group and Internet.Move Database, a television and film database company. This could signal a move by Amazon into selling movies.

The deals are Amazon's first acquisitions outside the US and underline its ambitions to become a major player in European book markets. "The Bookpages acquisition will enable Amazon to quickly offer UK and European consumers the same combination of selection, service and value that we now provide in the US," said Jeffrey Bezos, Amazon's founder and chief executive.

Amazon's orders from the UK are currently serviced from its warehouse in Delaware. Following the Bookpages deal, orders will be processed from a UK warehouse, provided the book is in stock. Amazon says

this will reduce delivery times and improve service.

Bookpages was set up 18 months ago by Simon Murdoch and five colleagues. It provides access to 1.2 million UK books in print to customers around the world. Mr Murdoch will now be managing director of Amazon in the UK, though it will trade on the internet under its existing website address, www.bookpages.co.uk.

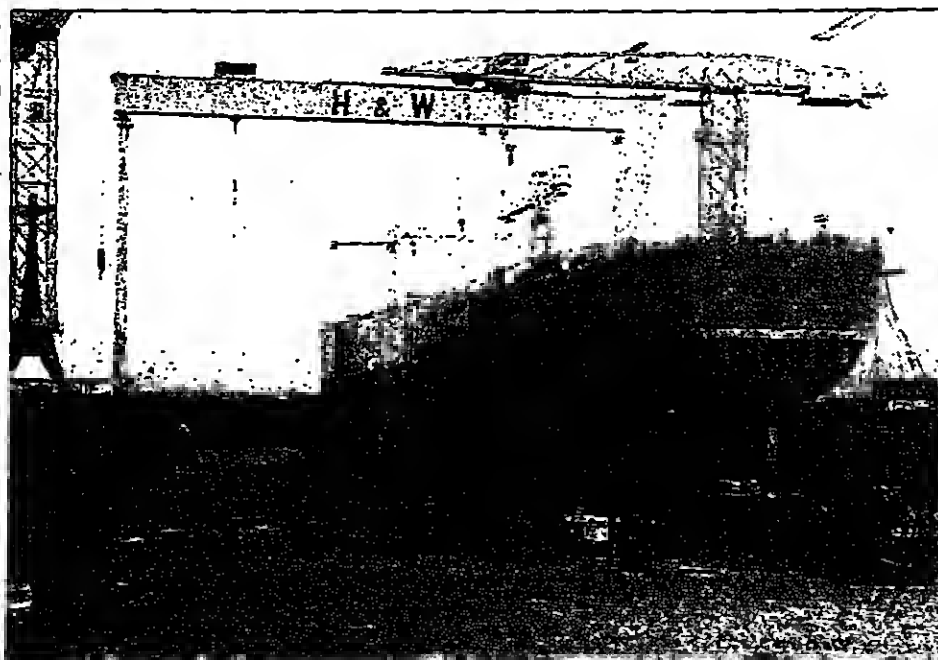
"We will be very aggressive about pricing in the future," Mr Murdoch said. Amazon.com has been one of the most successful internet retailers. Styling itself as "earth's largest bookstore" it offers more than 3 million books and CDs to customers in 160 countries. Quoted on Nasdaq, the company is now valued at \$2bn.

It recorded losses of \$9.25m on sales of \$87m in the first quarter of this year, up 32 per cent on the previous quarter. In the last full year it lost \$27.6m on sales of £148m.

Amazon raised \$275m on the debt markets last Friday to fund working capital and renew credit facilities.

UK booksellers are under pressure as the high street market consolidates and US retailers move in. Borders, an American group took over Books etc last year.

Barnes & Noble, another US book superstore operator is also keen on entering the UK market.



A different course: Yards such as Harland and Wolff will no longer be eligible for aid

British Regional Airlines to float

By Michael Harrison

THE FUTURE of British Midland, the country's second biggest scheduled airline, came under the spotlight yesterday after Sir Michael Bishop, its founder and controlling shareholder, unveiled plans to float his British Regional Airlines group.

The flotation, due in June, is expected to value the business at £80m-£100m and is bound to heighten speculation that British Midland is also heading ultimately for a stock market listing.

Sir Michael is expected to raise £20m-£25m from the float. He owns 51 per cent of a holding company which controls 90 per cent of British Regional Airlines. This holding will be reduced to just under 30 per cent. The float will raise £25m of new money to expand its fleet of 46 aircraft by leasing Embraer 45 aircraft.

British Regional Airlines flies 86 routes in the UK and Europe under a franchise deal with British Airways and its Manx Airlines subsidiary. The routes op-

erated under the BA name are the former Loganair network.

Last year the group doubled profits to £3.8m on turnover up by 21 per cent to £165m. It is one of the biggest airlines operating in Scotland with bases in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness.

British Regional Airlines was spun off from Sir Michael's Airlines of Britain group last year after which he bought out the 40 per cent stake in the business held by SAS, the Scandinavian airline. SAS continues to hold a 40 per cent stake in British Midland.

Sir Michael said the flotation was the final stage of the separation of British Regional Airlines and had no bearing on what he might ultimately do with his flagship airline, British Midland.

Terry Liddiard, the chief executive, said the airline was not in direct competition with low-cost carriers such as Ryanair, easyJet, Debonair and Go, which concentrate on routes with high passenger numbers.

Outlook, this page

EU ministers poised to scrap state subsidies for shipbuilders

By Michael Harrison

STATE subsidies for Europe's shipbuilders are set to be scrapped next week, ending 30 years of taxpayers' support for the industry in the face of state price competition from Far East yards.

European Union industry ministers are expected to vote to phase out the aid regime, introduced in 1969, when they meet in Brussels a week tomorrow.

Over the last three decades hundreds of millions of pounds have been pumped into European shipbuilders to help them compete with

yards in Japan and Taiwan.

The decision to end subsidies comes amid indications that Far East yards may be about to start a fresh round of price-cutting, following the downturn which has hit the Asian economies.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, who will chair next week's meeting, said the main effect of the aid

regime had been to distort competition between EU shipbuilders and that a European-wide end to subsidies should have little impact on their competitiveness.

The plan to end state support is in line with an OECD

Treaty on subsidies. However, the treaty is yet to be signed by the US, Japan or Korea.

The current directive on shipbuilding aid limits subsidies to 9 per cent of a ship's cost. It was originally set at 25 per cent. The subsidy is supposed to bridge the gap between world prices and the most competitive EU yards.

In the last five years 11 British yards, including Kvaerner Guran on the Clyde, VSEL and Vosper have received a total of £46m.

All EU member states, with the exception of France, are thought to be in favour of ending subsidies.

Fears over euro money laundering

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE NEW European Central Bank must limit the printing of high-denomination euro banknotes to prevent the single currency proving a bonanza for money launderers and other criminals, ministers meeting in Paris at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said yesterday.

But the meeting failed to resolve a row between member countries over the future of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, the controversial proposals for a new treaty on investment by multinationals. While some delegations, notably the French, claimed the talks had been suspended,

others insisted that negotiations would continue in time for a treaty to be adopted at next year's OECD meeting.

Philippe Maystadt, Belgium's finance minister, speaking on behalf of the Financial Action Task Force, made it clear that ministers would expect the European Central Bank to limit the number of 200 and 500 Euro notes in circulation once they are introduced in 2002.

"The ECB might decide to print rather a low number of these notes," he said. The US government prints nothing higher than \$100 bills in order to make life harder for criminals, less than a fifth of the value of the Euro 500 note. The new currency will include the higher denomination notes because

Germany has always issued some high-value Deutschmark notes.

A new report on progress by the Financial Action Task Force also called for bureaux de change to be subject to the same anti-laundering rules as all other financial institutions. It described bureaux de change as key links in the money laundering chain and urged their operators to form professional associations that could co-operate with international regulators.

The report set out a five-year plan to combat international financial crime, calling this a serious threat to democracy and financial soundness. The MAI remained the most controversial subject at this year's OECD meeting, turning the final communiqué into a fiasco. French ministers

had demanded a six-month suspension of the talks, and claimed victory when the final statement noted that the negotiators would not meet again until October. However, Donald Johnston, the OECD's secretary general, and other ministers, insisted negotiations were continuing.

Mr Johnston said: "There is no suspension... I am sure that the rather small, parochial issues that are on the table will be worked out."

Jacques Donduff, France's minister for overseas trade, said a delay was needed to take account of political objections to the proposed treaty. He said the negotiations had been too ambitious, and had not taken account of social, environmental and cultural objections.

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Footsie recovers quickly from Monday's panic

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

SHARES recaptured more than half of Monday's panic fall, with Footsie rallying 84.2 points to 5,806.6.

Although fears of higher US interest rates eased, the stock market remained fragile with the conviction growing that equities could be in for an unexciting summer.

Gavin Oldham, chief executive of stockbroker The Share Centre, pointed out that this year's splendid run was not particularly unusual. In the December to April period shares had made headway in 23 of the past 24 years.

He added: "This is usually followed by a rather subdued period with the average movement just 2 per cent from May to September. The likelihood is that we will see a similar pattern this year. After all, markets both here and in America have been looking for an excuse to go down and now have two: Japan and interest rates."

Boh Semple and David McBain at BT Alex Brown (NatWest Securities as was) are also cautious: "The equity market is in for a difficult few months. We stick to our year-end Footsie target of 6,000," they say.

As is so often the case, a strong Footsie advance was accompanied by rumours of corporate action - Royal Bank of Scotland, up 46p to 911p, was the name in the frame. Stories swirled of a deal with Scottish Widows, the insurance and pension mutual.

Presumably it would involve Royal Bank buying Widows, which would mean a windfall bonanza for the mutual's members.

The two seem a natural fit and rumours of a deal have often circulated. Trading links have been established and last summer there was a whiff of controversy when Widows paid 601p apiece for 33.4 million new Royal Bank shares.

lifting its stake to 4.69 per cent. There was dismay in some quarters that the new shares were only made available to Widows.

Royal Bank did offer just a touch of corporate action. It acquired the outstanding 49 per cent of RBS Advanta from Fleet Financial of Boston. The company is one of the fastest growing credit card businesses in this country.

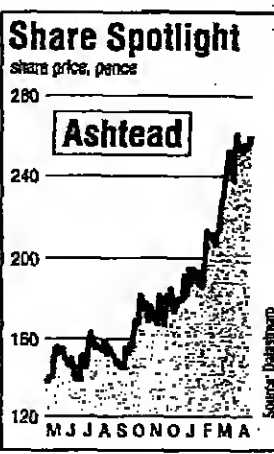
Norwich Union hounced 22.5p to 442.5p and other financials in recovery mode included Bank of Scotland, up 25p to 710p, and Standard Chartered, 23p to 893p.

Scottish & Newcastle's streamlining was worth 41p to 877p and figures lifted Sears 4.25p to 59.75p. Hard-pressed Next drew a little comfort from Sears, gaining 24p to 300p.

Debenhams remained the retail favourite of the week, up 12p to 386p following its results-inspired 26.5p gain on

Monday. SBC Warburg moved to bid to buy.

Christies International, the fine art auctioneer, firmed 11p to 273.5p. Bid talks collapsed in February. This month the shares have edged ahead, reviving hopes that corporate action could re-emerge. Joseph Lewis, the Bahamas-based tycoon, has approached 30 per cent of Christies and is



keen, it would appear, to realise his investment.

Glaxo Wellcome jumped 60p to 1,607p on Goldman Sachs backing but Reed International failed to respond to Heoderson Crutswaite support, falling 6.5p to 557p. Bass, up 25p to 1,112p and Whitbread, 15p to 1,045p, were encouraged by upgrades by Warburg; Allied Domecq, ahead of figures tomorrow, put on 4.5p to 623p.

Jefferson Smarfit hardened to 216.5p after the packaging and paper group confirmed a long-running suspicion that it was in talks to merge its 46.5p per cent US offshoot with another American group.

Ashtead, the plant hire group, improved 5p to 260p, a peak. Fund managers and analysts are examining its US operations.

MSB International, the IT group, gained 32.5p to 970p on reports that Mark

Goldberg is on the verge of selling around 18.5 per cent of the capital to finance his take over of relegated Crystal Palace football club.

Spargo Consulting strengthened 6p to 261.5p after reporting "significant progress" and Aspen, the communications group, held at 110p following sales by Photobition, which saw its takeover approach rebuffed earlier this month. It cut its stake to 2.1 per cent, selling shares at 90p. At one time the printing services group had 2.9 per cent.

Profit disappointment took its inevitable toll. Carrs Milling tumbled 17.5p to 138.5p and S&U, the credit group, 27.5p to 362.5p.

Hi-Tec, the trainers group, enjoyed the day's best run, gaining 33 per cent to 51.5p after disclosing it was seeking a US partner, presumably willing to bid for full control. UK Estates rose 3p to 25.5p on chairman David Gradel's 27p-a-share bid plan.

TAKING STOCK

STOCKBROKER Teather & Greenwood makes its stock market debut tomorrow. Its reverse take over of NRE an AIM-listed property and cash shell formerly called National Residential Properties, has been completed. Shares were placed at 70p, against the 69.5p suspension in January. T&G was one of the City's last remaining stockbroker partnerships.

WATERMARK, an advertising and marketing specialist, should produce profits of around £1.2m this year, believes stockbroker Duracher. Last year the AIM-listed company, which plans a full listing, made £1m, up from £653,000. The shares were little changed at 47.5p.

JOHN LUSTY, the food group paying £5.4m for a distributor of Mediterranean foods, has lost its biggest private shareholder, DR Rapoport. He sold 12.5 million shares (7.6 per cent), seemingly at 10p. The shares shaded 0.25p to 11.75p.

52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD P/E Code
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It has never been easier to run a business from home and to work on the move. In a special report, we survey the range of possibilities

Technology tailored to your needs

By Harvey Morris

USING off-the-shelf computer hardware and software, it is now possible to run a small business – even a home-based one – that only a decade ago would have required its own premises and the services of accountants, printers, salesmen and short-hand typists.

Computers can't make the morning coffee yet, but no doubt that will come.

Costs will vary but a reasonable global sum to set aside to computerise your business is £3,000. This will cover the ba-

Windows 95 or Windows NT, or a Power Mac, are regarded as the small-business standard.

Consider buying your system directly from a reliable mail order supplier such as Dan, Dell or Gateway rather than from a high street store. They are usually better placed to tailor and deliver a system to your specific needs and most have a good standard of after sales service, particularly if you pay for continuing, on-site support.

Ask for a system that comes with a suite of business software installed, such as Microsoft Office 97. If you are going to be handling your own accounts, you can also buy fairly cheap financial management packages such as Microsoft's Money 98 suite or Quicken. You can use these programs to track not just income and expenditure but also to keep a running check on tax and VAT liabilities.

You will also need a modem installed if you want to send and receive e-mail and if you want your computer to handle faxes. You will also want an Internet account, if only to hunt down potential clients.

There are a number of programmes available on the Internet that let you look up the addresses of specific categories of potential customers according to their geographical location, although at the moment these tend to be heavily weighted towards the United States.

In the future, you may also want to use the Internet to receive payment for your goods and services on-line.

Whatever business you are in, you will need a printer. But don't spend a fortune on a state-of-the-art laser printer if



Running your business from home: a reasonable sum for the equipment would be £3,000

a purchase order – into your computer database without having to retype it.

What if you work with a number of other people in separate locations and you want to be able to work as a group? Netscape, the Internet browser makers, have just come up with a service that allows you to rent your own private office on the Internet for a small monthly fee. This gives you the ability to share files and information over the Internet with your colleagues.

What can go wrong? Lots. Computers are sensitive beasts and can suddenly crash for no apparent reason. You could lose all your valuable data – a nightmare for any small business. It's therefore good insurance to have a renewable on-site service agreement with your hardware supplier, although this won't cover software glitches. To have a service contract that covers your whole system is usually prohibitively expensive for a home business.

But do invest in a Jaz or Zip drive. These are high-capacity floppy drives that can hold up to one gigabyte of information on a single disc. Get into the habit of regularly backing up your entire drive.

If everything crashes and you aren't backed up, don't panic. There are lots of small data recovery firms that advertise in the specialist magazines offering to recover the contents of your hard drive.

'Don't spend a fortune if you need only routine letters and invoices'

sic computer and communications set-up, give you the ability to fax, e-mail and handle your accounts. On top of that, you will need more advanced software, depending on what kind of business you are in.

It is important to make a checklist to determine your needs. There is no point, for instance, in spending lots of money on equipment that can turn out ultra-high quality graphics if you require only text-based functions.

If you are starting from scratch, aim for as high-powered a computer as you can afford: a Pentium II system running

you only need to produce routine, professional-looking letters and invoices – a high street ink-jet printer, at around £200, together with your installed office software, will do.

If you are going to be doing

a significant amount of photocopying as part of your business, you might want to invest in a dedicated copier. But they are expensive. For routine photocopying you can use a scanner. This need not cost you much

more than £100 and it can also be used to scan illustrations to go with product information that can then be faxed or e-mailed to your clients.

You don't need to buy a separate fax machine. All new PCs

fitted with a modem come with software that enables you to send and receive faxes direct from your computer. It can also handle your incoming fax messages and voice calls while you are away from the office.

Straight fax is now regarded in the on-line world as an "interim technology", a polite way of saying it's out of date.

E-mail is much more versatile because it allows you to integrate incoming material – say

Making sense of the phone options

ONCE upon a time, there were two people. They were self-employed and they each had a telephone. Then one day they decided to form a partnership. They brought their phones together, and they started to think: O.K., so how do we get these to talk to each other, so we can pass people over and swap calls?

And that's how it starts. You need more than one line, or more than one person answering calls to the one number.

You will need to know a few things: why it is important to have digital services (because all those options you get when a company is keeping you on hold need a digital signal to activate them) and what actual difference it makes whether you have a wireless system or something cabled. And above all, how much it will cost you.

A useful first port of call is British Telecom, which remains the first option for most companies for the moment. Usefully, it sells modular systems so you can build them up as you go.

The BT Revelation supports up to four lines with 12 extensions, which can take phones, fax or answering machines and even a doorphone with a security latch. You can take three-way calls and you'll need a few BT Revelation System-phones on the network.

A little more up-market is the Meridian Norstar Compact, also sold by BT. It can handle up to six exchange lines and 16 extensions but, again, it is modular, so you can buy as you

Whatever your phone needs, Guy Clapperton says start with modular systems to build as you go

need. A starter kit of one central control unit and three M7310 Systemphones will cost you £11.65 plus VAT.

The competition has been quick to respond to BT's challenge. Cable and Wireless has been marketing aggressively in the UK for some time and is selling heavily on service. If you want to look like a local company to your customers, C&W will give you a local number and divert it to your HQ miles away. It will divert your calls to any non-mobile phone out of office hours, and you can choose your own number for a price.

An alternative is to talk to a local cable company, most of which are hungry for market share and therefore likely to offer a service virtually at cost initially.

These organisations vary from area to area, but it is worth checking on them with an existing customer before taking the plunge – they often cut costs by using the cheapest subcontractor to do the cabling, and this sometimes means inexperienced labour is taken on.

It is also worth bearing in mind that, in the office, a cabled system means rearranging wires every time you change the office layout. If your company will be playing musical chairs often,

plump for Digitally Enhanced Cordless Telephones (DECT).

DECT is a digital system for cordless phones. This means it is more secure, the signal is stronger and the call is clearer (often as good as on a wired-in phone).

What is more, the system can handle multiple handsets from one point, each of which can pick up calls from several lines. This makes it a good way of setting up an *ad hoc* exchange in your office. DECT is quite expensive but it may be worth the price for the added flexibility and the reduced disruption.

Then there comes the time when you're out of the office but still want to be in touch. This is where a mobile phone is the obvious answer, but there are refinements you can add.

For example, Vodafone's Corporateworld system lets you integrate your mobile and deskbound telephones and treat the mobile versions as if they were ordinary extensions. This means your customers don't know whether they are being put through to you while you're in the office or visiting a client.

It means you don't lose calls through people not bothering to follow up when the reception-

ist tells them they can try you on your mobile. It's useful if you're likely to be on the road a lot, and Vodafone says customers with as few as fifty phones have been able to save money using it, so don't be put off by the name.

Failing that, pagers can be indispensable. You can go for numeric or text models; the numeric ones are cheaper and will tell you which number to call and not much else, unless you work out some sort of code.

The running costs will be more than the initial outlay on the product; BT starts off with its EasyReach service for home users and extremely small businesses, the basic version of which costs a one-off £59.99 plus 25p per call for a numeric service only. Text costs more, and there are advanced services for larger companies.

Future developments will come from elsewhere. Internet companies are starting to realise that there is mileage to be made connecting their customers through the Net, so you could get an international call for the same cost as a local one.

Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) is a flashy way of saying you can hitch your phone system to the computer which will then act as a voicemail or fax message centre, helping to log calls and manage your communications for you. This is a beck of a leap for smaller businesses but it will become increasingly common as long as the millennium bug doesn't murder us all in our beds.

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Aston convinced that Sheffield can go the Full Monty

SPEND long enough in the company of Mark Aston and you almost begin to believe that Sheffield can do the unthinkable on Saturday and become the unlikely of Challenge Cup winners.

Given the "Full Monty" connection, it was inevitable the Sheffield scrum-half and his team-mates would be obliged to get their kit off in the interests of promoting what many already regard as a non-contest. The results will be seen in various newspapers this week: most seeing them will expect the Eagles' playing limitations to be exposed equally starkly at Wembley.

But the Eagles are not like some teams I have seen in the build-up to Wembley - teams which smell of defeat in advance

and really only turn up to complete the numbers. If they are no-hopers, then no one has told Aston - at least not in terms that convince him.

"People wouldn't say that about us if they realised what we have come from," says the 30-year-old Aston, who joined the club in 1986 and, apart from a brief interlude at Featherstone, has been there ever since.

"I remember playing in front of two or three hundred people at Owlerton, with characters like Billy Harris who looked after me like a son.

"We used to look around that empty greyhound stadium in the pouring rain and think that perhaps we never would make a go of it in Sheffield."

Aston was one of the earliest examples of the talent spot-

Saturday's rugby league Challenge Cup final may allow the Eagles scrum-half to prove the doubters wrong, he tells Dave Hadfield

ting flair of Gary Hetherington, the man who built the Eagles.

Although he has moved to a bigger stage, as chief executive of Leeds, the long-serving player at Sheffield, like Aston and his captain, Paul Broadbent, will spare a thought for their old mentor as they walk out at Wembley.

"He'll have a lump in his throat when he sees us go out there," he says. "He'll be out there on the pitch with us, in one sense. This club has his baby; he took it through to a teenager and then he let it run wild."

Like Hetherington, there was a time when Aston felt compelled to fly the nest. A sojourn

at Featherstone hardly smacks of bright lights, big city, but Rovers were in an expansive mood at the time and promised Aston riches he could not get at the famously tightly-run Eagles.

"I went for the wrong reasons - for more money and to try to secure my future - but I was never happy there. People think the grass is always greener, but I've been there and it's not."

Typically, the shrewd Hetherington brought him back for a fraction of the fee that had taken him away.

"When I had a chance to come back, I didn't hesitate.

You have to be happy in your environment and I'm lucky that I've always had a good rapport with the spectators at Sheffield."

With both of them, a cynic might say, because the Eagles, for all the good work they have done, will still struggle to sell more than 6,000 tickets for Wembley - and few will feel, in their hearts, that their side will send them back up the M1 in high spirits.

But Aston genuinely believes that there is a way in which everyone can be proved wrong. Most players shy away from depicting a major final as a man-to-man confrontation,

but that is the way in which he sees his team winning it.

"The way we are approaching it is that each player has an individual battle against his opposite number. If we win enough of those individual battles, we win the match."

"If we look after the small picture, the big picture will look after itself."

That puts the emphasis on Aston's contest with the Wigan scrum-half, Tony Smith, a fellow-Castelfordian and a player he regards as the best in the British game in his position at the moment.

"He has done remarkably well to take over from Shaun Edwards, who was worshipped at Wigan."

"But I'm going to get right into his face and I'm going to

tell him that I'll be in his face the whole match."

"We're going to smash into them in the first 20 minutes to such an extent that we plant a seed of doubt. We want them to look at us and think 'This lot really want this. Are we prepared to put our bodies on the line in the same way?'"

Aston's kicking game will also be crucial, so much of Sheffield's plan revolving around it.

"There are a lot of wrong places to kick. You don't want to give Jason Robinson the ball, because he will hurt you."

"Wigan are probably the best-balanced side in the world. Robinson is the best winger. Gary Connolly the best centre, and Kris Radlinski is as good as any full-back in this country."



Aston: Last chance of success

"But we are going to go out there with such aggression. We are going to go into every tackle wanting to hurt them."

"A lot of people are writing us off, but Wigan know we can beat them - like we did at our place last season. And for someone like me, this match means everything. Being realistic, I might never get another chance, so this day has to be the day."

Benson and Hedges Cup: Durham take advantage as Butcher bolsters Surrey and Worcestershire struggle

Too many errors by Derbyshire

By Mike Carey

at Derby
Durham 185-6
Derbyshire 179-6
Durham won by six runs

NOTHING went quite according to plan here yesterday, which is never really a surprise at this stage of the season. The last of the day's errors, the running out of Derbyshire's Vince Clarke, removed their slight hopes of victory and Durham got home by six runs, a triumph which will do them the power of good.

It was not as exciting as it may sound. The game was reduced to a 30-over affair after heavy overnight rain had soaked part of the square, necessitating the use of matting to cover all pitches, and David Boon's decision to bat first suggested he was happy to get runs safely on the board in these conditions.

In the event, the pitch was one of those slow, two-paced affairs on which timing is not straightforward, and Clarke's sheer physical strength looked capable of seeing his side home after a series of early mishaps.

Durham probably bowled straighter in the all-important, early phase of the innings than Derbyshire had managed; certainly they got on top after a misunderstanding between Tim Tivats and Kim Barnett had resulted in both batsmen finishing at the same end.

Tivats had to go. Barnett was subdued for a while, but with Clarke punching the ball away confidently on both sides of the wicket, they pulled things

round to a point where 45 were needed from five overs, whereupon Barnett missed a straight full toss from Melvyn Betts as he tried to run it to third man.

Clarke shouldered the burden of keeping things moving but, with 17 required from two overs, he paid the price for hesitating over a second run from Phil DeFreitas' stroke to square-leg and, after several changes of mind, was comfortably run out.

After that, Betts and John Wood howled very straight, aiming for the block hole as often as possible, so there was never any likelihood of a late miracle, enabling Durham to complete a win that owed much to Paul Collingwood's unbeaten 30 from 18 balls.

The admirable Collingwood arrived after his side had also missed their way in mid-innings. His crucial piece of controlled aggression, again helped by no mean physical power, gave his side something to defend after a slump that had owed much to one batsman after another contributing to get out after making a start.

Wasim Akram, the former Pakistan captain, yesterday urged England's selectors to build for the future when they name Michael Atherton's successor as captain. "I don't think they should be looking to appoint a stop-gap captain," Wasim, who will lead Lancashire in today's Benson and Hedges Cup tie with Warwickshire at Old Trafford, said. "They should be looking towards Nasser Hussain or Mark Ramprakash."



Bailing out: Alec Stewart is clean bowled by Dimitri Mascarenhas in yesterday's Benson & Hedges tie at Southampton

Photograph: Peter Jay

Mascarenhas makes life hard for Hollioake

By David Llewellyn

at Southampton
Surrey 267-8; Hampshire 219
Surrey win by 48 runs

AT LEAST it was not the humiliating margin (165 runs) of last year's encounter in this competition, when Hampshire failed to get into three figures, but yesterday Surrey's strength still proved too much for Robin Smith and his trusty hand.

While the bowling lacked bite there was encouragement from Hampshire's own version

of the Ancient and Modern - Peter Hartley, 38, and Dimitri Mascarenhas, 20. This combo saw the home team singling from the same hymn sheet for a while, but it was their opponents who called the tune.

Hartley, who has come south after 13 seasons with Yorkshire, picked up 3 for 32, and the London-born, Australia-raised Mascarenhas, of Sri Lankan parentage, claimed four good wickets. He flared briefly with the bat as well, one straight shot off Ian Salisbury sailing into Northlands Road. But his

innings, like so many others in the Hampshire fine-up, was ineffectual and short-lived.

Surrey's captain Adam Hollioake used his bowlers carefully, restricting the Hampshire batsmen from the start and only Smith (45) and Giles White (47), who put on 78 for the third wicket, provided the home fans with much to cheer, although Adrian Aymes and Simon Reashaw had a last-wicket stand of 42. White should have reached his half century, but a too casual flick at what appeared a leg-side half volley at

the start of Martin Bicknell's second spell saw Ben Hollioake take a fine running catch coming round from mid-wicket to the square-leg boundary.

Bicknell did a deal of damage to the Hampshire innings, but his fine return of 4 for 38 was undone by Mascarenhas. In the youngster's opening over his seamers accounted for Surrey's opening pair. Alistair Brown's breezy 43, which included eight cracking boundaries and the odd alarm, ended with a straight forward catch at mid-on. Four balls later Alec

Stewart, playing his first game for the county since returning from the Caribbean, was done by one which nipped back. But the pair had put on 69 for the first wicket.

Mascarenhas accounted for Ben Hollioake shortly after to finish with 4 for 28. Unfortunately for Hampshire, that dismissal brought the Gold award winner Mark Butcher in. The England left-hander's 67 off 97 balls, during which he added 95 for the fourth wicket with Graham Thorpe (48), saw Surrey clear of their bit of trouble.

Hamilton outshines Yorkshire luminaries to bring cheer to Byas

By Jon Culley

at Huddersley
Worcestershire 128
Yorkshire 119-5
Yorkshire win by five wickets

YORKSHIRE maintained a buoyant start to the new season by launching their Benson and Hedges Cup campaign with a strong statement of intent, the

complexities of the Duckworth-Lewis method translating their 119 for 5 in 32.3 overs to a five-wicket victory over Worcestershire in a match subjected to several downpours.

David Byas is wary of false dawns but on the back of two wins in the Britannic Assurance Championship, in which his side have a healthy 14-point lead, yesterday's performance

will allow Yorkshire's captain to reflect with satisfaction on the story so far.

Darren Lehmann, with 31, and Craig White, who scored 27, provided essential momentum and Bradley Parker's streaky bottom-edged four supplied the winning runs - with 15 balls to spare - but the Gold Award went without argument to Gavin Hamilton, the young

Scottish-born seamer whose 4 for 33 included a run of three wickets in four deliveries.

Worcestershire's total was their smallest for a completed innings against Yorkshire in 11 B&H meetings and would have been embarrassing without the late recovery by David Leatherdale and Phil Newport.

Hamilton's extraordinary performance sparked a collapse

to 64 for 8 before Newport's entrance but the total had doubled by the time Yorkshire completed the job. The top-scorer, Newport's 42-ball stay yielded an unbeaten 28 after his partnership with Leatherdale, who scored 25, added 45 in 10 overs.

By contrast, Worcestershire's top order failed miserably as Yorkshire's strong seam attack ensured that Tom Moody regretted his decision to bat first.

After the first and longest

weather break, lasting two hours, Gavin Haynes fell to a low catch at the wicket off Paul Hitchison and then Hamilton began a run of four wickets in 10 balls when he bowled Moody. In his next over, the 23-year-old delivered three examples of how to exploit a seaming pitch by having Stuart Lampitt, Steven Rhodes and then Richard Illingworth caught off the outside edge.

the men play matches over the best of five sets and the women over the best of three.

"Why do people pay more in boxing for a heavyweight title fight than for a lightweight one?" asked John Curry, the Wimbledon chairman, after yesterday's prize money announcement. "We look at the situation every year, but we believe we are being fair. There is a greater demand for men's tennis and less depth in the women's game, even today with

Venus Williams and Martina Hingis arriving. And this year there is no certainty that Monica Seles or Steffi Graf will play."

Wimbledon counters the argument that women's matches tend to be more attractive on the fast grass courts than the men's power game by revealing that a survey during last year's championship showed that 70 per cent of spectators preferred men's tennis. The survey also showed that 60 per cent of the visitors to Wimbledon were women.

Incidentally, first-round losers in the women's singles at the Wimbledon qualifying event at Roehampton will be paid £805 (Billie Jean eat your heart out) while the men who fall the first round there will receive £1,035 - £965 short of Laver 1968 first prize.

Cricket scoreboard

Benson and Hedges Cup

Derbyshire v Durham

DERBY: Durham beat Derbyshire by 6 runs.

Durham won toss

DURHAM

J S Lewis c Gough b 47

M J Foster b DeFreitas 9

J J Morris c Bicknell b Harris 21

K J Barnett b Betts 31

N J Spear b Harris 19

M P Spangish c Harris b Clarke 30

P D Collingwood not out 23

J Bocking not out 1

Extras (b 1, lb 2, w 5, nb 1) 23

Total (for 6, 36 overs) 185

Fall: 1-25, 2-62, 3-122, 4-128, 5-140, 6-182

Did not bat: M M Batts, J Wood, S J Harrison

Bowling: DeFreitas 6-0-25-1, Clark 6-0-42-1, Harris 3-0-32-2, Pugh 2-0-24-0, Gough 7-0-38-2, Barnett 1-0-7-0

Derbyshire v Worcestershire

HEADINGLEY: Yorkshire beat Worcestershire by 5 wickets on Duckworth-Lewis method.

Worcestershire won toss

WORCESTERSHIRE

W P C Weston run out 12

V S Solanki c Parker b Silverwood 10

G A Hick c Byas b Gough 9

M J Moody b Hamilton 9

G R Haynes c Silverwood b Harrison 4

O A Leatherdale b B 25

S R Lampitt c Byas b Hamilton 4

15 J Rhodes c Silverwood b Hamilton 2

R N Kingworth c Byas b Hamilton 0

P J Blevins not out 28

A Shepherd b Silverwood 8

Hampshire v Surrey

SOUTHAMPTON: Surrey beat Hampshire by 48 runs.

Hampshire won toss

SURREY

A D Brown c Smith b Mascarenhas 43

T A Stewart c Aymes b Hartley 19

B C Hollis c Aymes b Hartley 13

G P Thorpe c Aymes b Renshaw 48

M A Bullock c Aymes b Hartley 27

A J Hollis c McLaren b Mascarenhas 36

A J Rastie c Lavery b Mascarenhas 4

N Shand c Keesh b Hartley 16

I K Salisbury not out 16

M P Bicknell not out 8

Extras (b 17, w 10) 27

Total (for 8, 50 overs) 287

Fall: 1-17, 2-23, 3-32, 4-51, 5-58, 6-62, 7-64, 8-64, 9-109

Bowling: Silverwood 8-2-15-1, Gough 8-1-32-2, Hamilton 8-0-33-4, Hutchison 4-5-29-1, White 7-1-26-0

Yorkshire v Hampshire

HEADINGLEY: Yorkshire beat Hampshire by 5 wickets on Duckworth-Lewis method.

Yorkshire won toss

YORKSHIRE

D G Cribb c Spangish b Wood 25

S J Pollock c Harris b Betts 14

T A Twiss run out 3

K J Barnett b Betts 38

S B Subbings b Foster 7

V P Clarke run out 48

P A J DeFreitas not out 19

J Bocking not out 2

Extras (b 1, lb 1, w 1) 3

Total (for 6, 36 overs) 179

Fall: 1-46, 2-57, 3-58, 4-76, 5-141, 6-182

Did not bat: M M Batts, P Aldred, A J Harris

Bowling: Betts 6-1-29-2, Harrison 6-0-30-1, Wood 7-0-31-1, Pugh 2-0-16-0, Leatherdale 4-0-19-0

Umpires: V A Holder and R A White

Hampshire v Surrey

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Hampshire won toss

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Umpires: V A Holder and R A White

Still no parity as Wimbledon pays more

Tennis

By John Roberts

WIMBLEDON will mark the 30th anniversary of open tennis by offering record prize money of £7.2m for this year's championships (which run from 22 June to 5 July), an increase of 4.7 per cent on last year.

The men's singles title, currently held by Pete Sampras, will be worth £435,000 (a rise of £20,000), and the women's singles championship, due to be defended by Martina Hingis, £391,500 (£18,000 more).

While the face of the All England Club has changed during the three decades since amateurs and professionals were first allowed to play together, it remains set against equal pay for women.

In 1968, when the total prize

money amounted to £26,150, the Australian Rod Laver received £2,000 for the men's singles title and £750 went to the American Billie Jean King, the women's singles champion and a staunch campaigner for the women's movement.

Although the Women's Tennis Association continues to press for pay parity, Wimbledon's resistance remains firm. The reasoning is based on the greater popularity and depth of the men's game and the fact that

the men play matches over the best of five sets and the women over the best of three.

"Why do people pay more in boxing for a heavyweight title fight than for a lightweight one?" asked John Curry, the Wimbledon chairman, after yesterday's prize money announcement. "We look at the situation every year, but we believe we are being fair. There is a greater demand for men's tennis and less depth in the women's game, even today with

Venus Williams and Martina Hingis arriving. And this year there is no certainty that Monica Seles or Steffi Graf will play."

Wimbledon counters the argument that women's matches tend to be more attractive on the fast grass courts than the men's power game by revealing that a survey during last year's championship showed that 70 per cent of spectators preferred men's tennis. The survey also showed that 60 per cent of the visitors to Wimbledon were women.

Incidentally, first-round losers in the women's singles at the Wimbledon qualifying event at Roehampton will be paid £805 (Billie Jean eat your heart out) while the men who fall the first round there will receive £1,035 - £965 short of Laver 1968 first prize.

Grass and Cash: How Wimbledon's prize money has grown in the professional era

Year	1968	1978	1988	1998
Total	£26,150	£279,023	£2.8m	£7.2m
Men	£2,000	£15,000	£165,000	£435,000
Winner	Rod Laver	Bjorn Borg	Steffi Graf	
Women	£750	£17,000	£148,500	£391,500
Winner	Billie Jean King	Martina Navratilova	Steffi Graf	

Scots see key to the future

Simon Buckland

THE Scottish Sports Council yesterday delivered a timely message that it knows what is required to produce another generation of sporting heroes. The launch of a new national strategy, called Sport 21, arrives at the wake of the assertion by David Gough, the Rangers captain, that he fears for the development of Scotland's future prospects. Gough expressed doubts that the right system was in place to deliver sporting excellence and suggested Scotland should be used as a model for change.

The 17-year-old skipper also became the way in which society offers children too many more options away from sport and into the world of work. After more than two years of consultation, moves were initiated at Hampden Park yesterday to ensure that the kind of system Gough feels is lacking can be put into motion. Among the plans is a National Physical Activity Strategy to guarantee the provision of sport in schools and the creation of a Scottish Institute of Sport within a year to co-ordinate and enforce reform.

The only drawback for the ambitious scheme is funding. The chairman of the Scottish Sports Council, Graeme Smith, admitted that there was unlikely to be a rise in existing resources. However, he remains confident that, with better targeting of the estimated £200m available over the next five years, progress can be made towards a more sporting nation.

"Sport 21 aims to maximise Scotland's sporting potential and establish it as a world-class sporting nation," Smith said. "What we have is a blend of aspiration and reality. We can achieve everything without the need for new substantial investment as long as present funding levels are maintained. The cynics might say we have heard all this before and ask what the difference will be and point to the fact our aim in life for the past 25 years of this council has been the same. But I think we have reached a new level and can now make great progress as we now have the resources in every sense to achieve our vision."

Sam Galbraith, the Scottish Sports Minister, offered his backing, albeit more vocal than financial, to the ideals of Sport 21.

"Too often our political culture is one of being reactive, whereas this is a long-term view of where we want to go," he said. Among those at the unveiling was the Great Britain hockey international Rhona Simpson, who as a PE teacher in Glasgow is well placed to respond to Gough's suggestion that youngsters now have less interest in sport.

"I think the enthusiasm is still there - when the children are younger they are still keen to get involved," she said. "But if you don't catch them young it can be more difficult. You have to get into them and start coaching them at the right age. With the right support the talent is still there and I think today showed everyone is positive about funding, because ultimately a lot of it comes down to that. The Lottery has made a big difference and while I can see there might be concerns about over-reliance on that source of funding, the hope is it can spark further investment as success is achieved."

"Expectations of success are high in Scotland but I don't feel any extra pressure. Being a small nation makes it more of a challenge but also makes for greater pride."

In a few weeks' time Scotland will compete in the women's hockey World Cup for the first time and that is something we have worked hard for on and off the field. Hopefully for future players it will be easier."

Tony Higgins, the secretary of the Scottish Professional Footballers' Association, also senses Gough's pessimism may be out of date. "I think what Richard Gough has said is a perception," he said. "There is no doubt we don't have the same number of quality young players coming through."

"But in fairness now the Scottish game has recognised that and next year it will be compulsory in the new Premiership that people have a proper youth development system."

"We have not invested enough money in the last 15 to 20 years and if you look at the example of the Scandinavian countries, that is what we must follow. But the problem is being addressed by the SFA, who are starting a youth coach license which is an important ability. That coach is the most important to any club because he is nurturing the future of that club - it is important we raise the status of that section."



Game on: Elliott Dempsey (left, Oxford United) and Dominic Brindley (Stoke City) twist and turn in London yesterday Photograph: Robert Hallam

Flick of the wrist sends Southampton to World Cup

Table manners were razor sharp as eight youngsters fought for a ticket to France yesterday. Adam Szreter watched the action

THEY were all trying their best to hide it, but the tension was etched in their faces. Tickets to the World Cup quarter-final in Lyon were at stake, and while the rest of the country was furiously dialling a hot line in France, eight young boys twiddled with the hopes of their tantalised parents on two table-football tops at a trendy West End cafe yesterday.

It was none other than the final of the Smoby Monnetet Table Football Championship, a worthy venture organised by Football in the Community and aimed at seven-to-11-year-olds throughout the country. The thousands who entered the tournament in October had been whittled down to just eight and for the lucky winner, and his lucky parents, an all expenses paid trip to France was awaiting. Not to mention, of course, an exhibition match against David Beckham.

The 10-year-old Elliott Dempsey, representing Oxford United, was most people's favourite before the action began at Football in the Community. In his regional final he had beaten the previously unbeatable Leicester City 10-0, while the other seven finalists had earned much closer calls.

In his first match Matthew Walker of Brighton issued young Elliott with a warning of what lay in store by going one up inside five seconds. Elliott, backed by a posse of Dempseys down from Oxford for the day, fought back and punched the air as he took a 2-1 lead. "Watch the table," shouted his mum.

It was a seesaw affair, but our man pulled through 10-8. Over on the other table the youngest competitor, nine-year-old Patrick Walker of Sheffield United, was struggling against Scarborough in the shape of Martin Harwood. "He doesn't use his goalkeeper," said Patrick's dad as Scarborough romped to a 10-4 win.

Tony Currie, the David Beckham of his day and now

hugged down in midfield. Southampton took a 2-0 lead, and after an eternity Stoke pulled one back. The honour of the Potters remained in tact for a while, but at 3-2 the Saints' centre-forward unleashed an unstoppable shot from point-blank range, and somehow you knew the contest was over.

Southampton ran out 10-3 winners and proceeded to demolish the boy Beckham in the exhibition match that followed. Most of the disappointed parents by the time the presentations were made, but Stoke City's dad sat forlornly in the background, taking good care of the runner-up prize but not quite able to put Lyon out of his mind.

Table football can be a cruel game.

Football in the Community office at Sheffield United, hung his head in mock despair. After the second group of round-robin matches the finalists were already clear. Southampton's Martin Hiley and Dominic Brindley of Stoke had won both of their games by a distance, and while young Elliott, a 10-9 loser in his second game, beat Stoke 10-5 in his last match it wasn't quite enough.

The final was played under the watchful gaze of Beckham. It was a close affair with both sides adopting identical 2-5-3 formations, and as a consequence the game became

difficult to finish something off, but we all know it is in our hands now and we do not have to look around for other situations that will help or hinder us.

"I am not nervous in any way because the mood in the dressing-room is very good and we know we just have to continue the way we have been doing things and then it is done."

"But the first thing you learn every year is that the very next game is always the most important. The thing right in front of you is always the biggest. And it is my job still to keep everything calm and relaxed."

Wenger determined to keep his cool

Football

By Bill Pierce

ARSENE WENGER might be on the brink of becoming the first foreign coach to win the Premiership but with the title almost within Arsenal's grasp, he knows there is still more pressure to overcome.

Home victories against Derby County tonight and Everton on Sunday for a team which has already cruised to eight League wins in a row, and been beaten just once in their last 27 matches, will leave champions Manchester United handing over their title.

Even the United manager, Alex Ferguson, admits he is convinced that only a freak collapse can now stop Arsenal winning their first title since 1991, despite his side staying in contention with Monday night's 3-0 win at Crystal Palace.

However, Wenger is acutely aware of the weight of expectancy on his shoulders. He said: "You can never escape the history of a club like this. At some clubs success is accidental sometimes, but at Arsenal it is compulsory. There is a history of success at Highbury that makes you feel you must always work very hard to achieve more."

"It is a pressure, of course, because I know I cannot go to work every day and say my target is to finish 10th to 15th in the table. People would laugh at me. But whatever happens now I know the team has had a very good season. What has happened is done and we can already be pleased with the quality of our performances."

"We are in the last 100 yards of the title race and I'm positive, concentrated and relaxed. I know the players are, too. It is always

difficult to finish something off, but we all know it is in our hands now and we do not have to look around for other situations that will help or hinder us.

"I am not nervous in any way because the mood in the dressing-room is very good and we know we just have to continue the way we have been doing things and then it is done."

"But the first thing you learn every year is that the very next game is always the most important. The thing right in front of you is always the biggest. And it is my job still to keep everything calm and relaxed."

"It is always difficult to know how people see you, being a foreigner, but I just feel more a manager who loves football than specifically one that comes from a different country. I feel that football is my nationality really."

"For me there are many very good English managers here. The situation for every club is very different but I don't think that just because a foreign manager would win the title every other club will say they must have one."

"I just concentrate on my job and try to find the best way to fight to the top of the League."

Sporting Digest

Faldo hits back at the critics who claim his career is over

GOLF NICK FALDO admitted yesterday that he is going through a "low" in his career but hit back at critics who wrote him off after he carded the highest score of his career on the US PGA tour.

"He revealed he could be suffering from 'analysis paralysis' because he was worrying too much, but added there was no reason he could not rediscover the form that has won him six majors."

Faldo, speaking at a news conference for the Asian PGA Omega tour's inaugural PGA Open, said he had been written off many times before but could be a major force.

"In 1991 a reporter was sent to the Irish Open to write a story saying I was finished - unfortunately for him I went on to win the tournament," he said.

Faldo will be playing for the first time since his 12-over par 83 in the MCI Heritage Classic. "It's true I've probably been thinking about things a little too much, and maybe the best advice for my game at the moment is to spend more time fishing," he said.

"Maybe I have bogged myself down a little and not found enough time to switch off." Sweden's Helen Alfredsson is to defend the McDonald's WPGA Championship in Europe at Glencolles in August. Alfredsson, a four-time Solheim Cup player, will be joined by her former team-mates Laura Davies, Alison Nicholas, Kathryn Marshall and Joanne Modrey.

Football results

Football results

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 6 Detroit 5; Anaheim 3 Baltimore 1; Oakland 7 Tampa Bay 6; NY Yankees 1 Toronto 0; Chicago White Sox 0 Cleveland 3; St Louis 5 Minnesota 4; Pittsburgh 6 Kansas City 3; Seattle 5 Texas 4.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Houston 4 NY Mets 3; Cincinnati 3 St Louis 2; Philadelphia 10 Pittsburgh 1; Florida 5 Colorado 4; (10 innings); Atlanta 3 Arizona 2; Milwaukee 3 Los Angeles 1; (10 innings); Chicago Cubs 3 San Diego 2.

MLB FIRST-ROUND PLAY-OFFS (best-of-seven matches): Eastern Conference quarter-finals: Montreal 3 Pittsburgh 1 (Montreal lead series 2-1); Buffalo 6 Philadelphia 1 (Buffalo lead series 2-1). Western Conference quarter-finals: St Louis 3 Los Angeles 2 (St Louis lead series 2-0).

Basketball

Tim Duncan of the San Antonio Spurs, has been named the NBA Rookie of the Year, receiving 113 of a possible 118 votes.

Crickets

The former Indian Test player, Ramesh Desai, who resigned last month as chairman of the national cricket selection committee on health reasons, died late on Monday of heart failure. He was 58.

Cycling

GIRO DEL TRENTINO Second stage (174.5km, Marone to Tignes, 11.1 P Savio (Italy) 4th 50min 30sec; 2 P Pigo (Italy) 2nd 49min 50sec; 3 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 4 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 5 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 6 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 7 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 8 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 9 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 10 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 11 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 12 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 13 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 14 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 15 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 16 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 17 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 18 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 19 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 20 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 21 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 22 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 23 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 24 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 25 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 26 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 27 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 28 P Pigo (Italy) 1st 49min 40sec; 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England fans miss out again over tickets

Football

By Catherine Riley

THE ROW over the sale of World Cup tickets rumbles on, with fans who tried to buy tickets yesterday being told all England's games are sold out, despite the organisers making about 69,000 additional tickets available through the telephone hotline.

Although supporters that got through were told tickets were

available for 33 of the 55 first and second-round games, there were none for England matches. Some fans complained that where they have been able to buy England tickets, if they gave an English address, they were then told there were none available, but if a Scottish address was given, the purchase was allowed to go ahead.

The Football Association have been allocated more tickets for England's opening match against Tunisia, but they

were distributed to the official supporters' club.

There were more than 2.2 million calls from France to the hotline yesterday, compared with just 60,000 from the rest of the world, figures partly explained by restrictions on overseas calls into the French telephone system. British Telecom reported that 50,000 attempted calls - half from Scotland - were made from Britain in the first hour after the line opened yesterday.

Meanwhile, one place it seems you can't give away tickets is Stuttgart. Chelsea's European Cup-Winners' Cup final opponents have returned 11,000 of the 12,000 tickets offered to them. Chelsea have already been allotted their own allocation of 12,000 tickets for the match at the 34,000-capacity stadium in Stockholm on 13 May and could have sold double that amount.

Stuttgart were entitled to the same amount of seats but have

only taken up 1,000, so the rest have been returned for general sale to the Swedish Football Association, who as hosts had already received 6,000 seats.

Glenn Hoddle is to sue Uri Geller for libel and malicious falsehood, his solicitors announced yesterday, and the England coach is seeking aggravated and exemplary damages, which could run into six figures, should the case go in his favour.

East Yorkshire is the latest

area to be mooted as the new home for Wimbledon. The Dons chairman, Sam Hammam, has spoken to his Hull City counterpart, David Lloyd, about the chances of the Londoners moving to Yorkshire, although both have dismissed talk of a possible merger.

Keith Blunt, a former coach of England's Under-16 team and a technical official within the FA, has been appointed coach of the Chinese Olympic

team. Blunt has been given a one-year contract, along with his assistant coach and fellow Briton Colin Toal.

Leeds announced yesterday that they are to launch their own television station. The club also plans to increase the capacity of Elland Road to 45,000, by spending around £10m refurbishing the West Stand, and adding an additional tier.

Investment column, page 20

Hodgson pursues Monaco's Djetou

By Alan Nixon

ROY HODGSON is keen to take Martin Djetou, a Monaco defender, to Blackburn Rovers following his impressive performance against Manchester United in the Champions League quarter-finals.

Djetou, who is likely to cost Rovers £4m, was watched by Hodgson's assistant, Tony Parkes, when he played in France at the weekend. The player, who was born in the Ivory Coast, can play either as a centre-back or as a midfield anchor man, two areas where the Rovers coach is looking to improve his team.

Hodgson, who apparently has about £25m to spend, has also been busy in his search for new players after Blackburn's poor run of form towards the end of the season.

The striker John Spencer's transfer to Everton took another major turn yesterday. The Blackburn Park chairman, Peter Johnson, told the Scottish press that he has blocked his £2.5m move from Queen's Park Rangers and plans to review his £1.5m bid for the player.

Johnson postponed the move because he does not want to spend £1.5m and give the player a three-year £10,000 a week deal if the club are in the First Division. Spencer thought he would be joining Everton yesterday after he was given the all clear following medicals to check into a heart murmur.

The striker was unavailable for comment last night. Kendall, who was in Greece yesterday, was shocked by the chairman's decision after he had promised the player that the deal would be completed.

George Graham, who wants a new partner for his leading scorer, Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, as Rod Wallace plans to leave Leeds on a free transfer in summer, has been watching Europe's leading scorer, Vissas Arnhem's Nikos Mahlas. The Leeds manager wants to sign the Greek international, who scored his 33rd goal of the season against the Dutch champions, Ajax, on Sunday, with Graham in the stands.

The 24-year-old Mahlas has an agreement in his contract allowing him to leave at a fixed price of about £3m. He was a regular scorer for OFI in Crete and has scored 11 goals in 36 internationals, but he has come to the fore with his fine season for Vissas.

White unable to unleash the whirlwind

Snooker

By Guy Hodgson
at The Crucible, Sheffield

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN was not quite in the same league as the man who shot Bambi's mother yesterday - but he was in the division below and was heading for the play-offs. To meet Jimmy White at the Embassy World Championship this year makes you about as popular as the plague.

Make that less popular if you actually beat him, and O'Sullivan has every chance of doing that today. After the first session of their quarter-final he leads 7-1 and needs just six frames out of 17 this morning and tonight. White needs something close to a miracle.

To explain the whirlwind's popularity is to examine the peculiar taste of the nation, because no one could describe him as the typical cleaner-than-detergent hero. It is as if Britain got fed up with the Gary Linekers and Bobby Charltons of this world and decided to sample a darker figure. The 35-year-old White has experimented with most vices and he, in turn, has become a vice we all like to indulge in.

A television audience of 6.5 million watched White, who has reached the final here six times but never won, beat Darren Morgan in the second round, a phenomenal figure for a second-round match on a Sunday evening, and yesterday the BBC showed every shot live. The country likes the loser as much as it distrusts a winner and White has fulfilled the unlucky runner-up so many times the

feeling has turned to something deeper.

Particularly as no one gave him an earthly of doing well this time as he had to qualify just to reach the Crucible and had the misfortune to draw Stephen Hendry in the first round. Add a win over his nemesis in the 1990s, however, to a run of misfortune that has included the death of his mother and brother and being declared bankrupt last year - and never has the White handwagon been so packed with support.

That was apparent as the master of ceremonies Alan Hughes announced the players yesterday afternoon. "Peter Ebdon, polite applause; Mark Williams", ditto; "Jimmy White", hold on to the roof. You would not think the words "Come on Jimmy" could be turned into anything other than encouragement - but, when 950 people do it out of sync and in a confined space, it became spine-tingly intimidating.

Even Hughes, who makes a mistake about once a decade, appeared nervous, calling it a second-round match but he recovered gloriously to describe White as "the Rolls-Royce of snooker rolling back the years". Sadly the bonnet was up and he was calling for a tow almost before he got round the corner.

You did not envy O'Sullivan having to confront this wall of opposition, but he wandered into the arena as if he had just come in off the street to practice. He should have been a casualty of nerves, instead he casually rolled in a century break, the 45th of the tournament.

White won the next after he trapped his opponent behind the yellow and let him foul three times, but then the match completely went away from the script. O'Sullivan made it 2-1 with a break of 85 and then just waited to pounce on any errors. The 22-year-old seventh seed can be profligate himself, but on this occasion he had a ruthlessness about him.

White, meanwhile, was not playing well and knew it. At one point he lightly stamped his foot on the floor as another chance was blown; for most of the session he sat in his chair, playing with his hair or taking a drag on a cigarette.

Then came an insight as to why he is so popular. A lovable rogue he may be, but no-one would ever dispute his honesty on a snooker table and, when he missed a pink into the corner pocket and accidentally touched a ball with the rest in his disappointment, he called himself for a foul. The referee had not seen the offence, he could have got away with it, but his code of conduct would not allow him.

While White was being honest to the point of speedy self-destruction, Peter Ebdon and Mark Williams were locked in a far slower contest, their eight frames taking three hours compared to the 95 minutes on the other table.

White might go quickly today, but, as Williams had only a 5-3 lead at the end of his marathon with Ebdon, the suspicion is that this match will linger far longer before the winner is decided.

Scores, Digest, page 29



In control: Ronnie O'Sullivan contemplates his next shot against Jimmy White yesterday. Photograph: Eric Whitehead

Pugh turns the heat on elite clubs

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

SENIOR delegates of the International Rugby Board, the governing body whose laughable mishandling of the shift to professionalism helped plunge European rugby into the chaos from which it is now attempting to extricate itself, yesterday wheeled out the heavy artillery in an effort to subdue England's recalcitrant Premiership clubs.

The IRB, shaken by the top-flight clubs' decision to mount a European Commission challenge to existing regulations concerning primacy of player contracts, international release dates and negotiating rights over broadcasting and sponsorship deals, have ordered 82 member unions and associations to relinquish contact with any

team represented by English First Division Rugby, the clubs' umbrella organisation. Significantly, the move comes just three days before the scheduled completion of peace talks between the RFU and its clubs.

Vernon Pugh, the IRB chairman, confirmed the Rugby Football Union had been summoned to a meeting in Dublin on 18 May to explain its alleged tardiness in bringing the clubs to heel. "If certain people are not prepared to abide by rules or try to effect desired changes other than through the democratic process within the IRB and their own union, they have no place within the official structure and nor has any union that accepts or accedes to such a challenge," said the influential Welshman in his best lawyerese.

Pugh's comments were supported by Dick McGruther,

the board's game regulations committee chairman and a member of the Australian Rugby Union, which has led the international uproar over the activities of the English clubs. "The rugby world outside England finds it difficult to comprehend why problems caused by a small group of individuals, whose declared intent is to destroy the existing governance of the game, have not been resolved," he said.

"The IRB and its member unions have been excessively patient in allowing the RFU sufficient time to achieve management of its own internal affairs. There is no room for fudging the issue when constituent members are taking action against you. It is time to govern. If there is a serious or continuing breach on the part of any union in respect of IRB reg-

ulations, that union puts at risk its membership of the board and all the privileges attached to it."

Theoretically, at least, that last comment held out the possibility of England's expulsion from international competition, including next year's World Cup. In reality, though, any such measure is so unlikely as to border on the unimaginable. England, which has the biggest television audience of any competing nation, will host one of the tournament pools and hamstring would cause massive commercial consequences.

There was no immediate official response from the RFU, but senior figures expressed astonishment at the heavy-handedness of the IRB stance. "At the end of the day, regulations have to be sustainable in law," said one. "Soccer went through this with the Bosman

upheaval and it seems ludicrous that England should be threatened with the big stick simply because the clubs have made a perfectly legal application to the EC."

Doug Ash, the EFDR chief executive, was equally flabbergasted. "We're disappointed by the timing and nature of this announcement," he said. "We believe several of the IRB laws to be anti-competitive and, therefore, that they cannot be applied in Europe."

"The reality is that European rugby is different from that in other parts of the world, because we are governed by EC laws. The French Federation and the French government have already recognised the need to give clubs freedom to act in a sensible commercial manner."

Ireland squad, page 29

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3597, Wednesday 29 April By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution

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ACROSS

- 1 Pa can't manage a snooze (6)
- 4 Fashion set by sovereigns in Thames borough (8)
- 10 To bat defensively, one can not make nicks (9)
- 11 Reveille in the Territorial Army (5)
- 12 Scottish cakes served in cafes (7)
- 13 Topical, tropical air (7)
- 14 Works in the ring, we hear? (5)
- 15 Churchwarden's stock, possibly (4-4)
- 18 Small songbird's passion in northern river (8)
- 20 City oversized, also known as port (5)

DOWN

- 23 New opening for Old Nick in London? (7)
- 25 Itinerant crazy, breaking icon (7)
- 26 Sympathy card? (5)
- 27 Grace, perhaps, of man with willow (9)
- 28 Page title in Shakespeare? (8)
- 29 Menace in timbers boring bunk (3-3)
- 1 Notes in-and-out in business? (4-4)
- 2 Defeat utterly, arranging no truce (7)
- 3 States things (9)
- 5 Replacing generator on inspectorial round (2,4,8)
- 6 Greek trouble to provide platter (5)
- 7 Templar playing squash (7)
- 8 Elgar's D minor variation? (6)
- 9 Deception by means of imitation facade (5,9)
- 16 Plimsoll line creator? (9)
- 17 Risky game, taking taxi back with weight of precious stones (8)
- 19 Shaded seats on a Jumbo (7)
- 21 Examiner of books, one hears (7)
- 22 Worker over border in country air (6)
- 24 Plant growing more quickly with head removed (5)

Milk into girls go everywhere

MILK-DO

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